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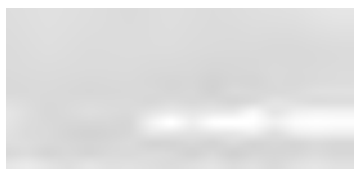
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"Do you remember?" asked Helen, pointing — p. 228.

THE

a good book.

WIFE'S STRATAGEM:

A STORY



FOR

FIRESIDE AND WAYSIDE.

by

Frances Elizabeth Mense Barrow

NEW YORK:

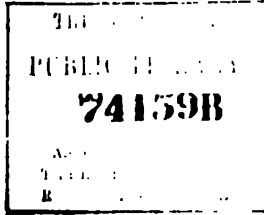
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ENTERED, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1862, by
FANNY BARROW,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York.

TO
MRS. JOHN A. DIX,
THE LOVELY WOMAN,
THE GOOD FRIEND, AND THE TRUE CHRISTIAN,
THIS BOOK
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY
Dedicated.



INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

TO MESSIEURS THE CRITICS—ALSO, THE DEAR PUBLIC.

CRITICS are fearfully and wonderfully made. They are congestive, as to their livers; they are supernaturally bilious; their brains are incessantly stirred up by wildly incongruous doses, such as a quarto volume on "Morphological Development," and the thrilling tale of "The Yankee Schoolmistress, or the Fatal Pistol." They must digest both as they can at the same time. They must review these diverse books at the rate of fifty a week; they must burn the midnight oil; they neglect to put coals on the dying fire, and by consequence they are in a chronic condition of headache, earache, toothache, and sore throat all at once. How then, in the name of that Common Sense which has no respect for circumstances or the abuser of Nature's laws, can a critic do other than hate or despise his tormentors—the books.

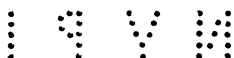
And yet there is nothing more valuable to an author than a kindly criticism. If mixed with praise, it is accepted by the public as letters patent of merit.

A good writer says that criticism frequently "lacks imagination, as well as charity and humility." The critic persists in "commenting upon the works of others from his own peculiar ground and point of view." He will not look at what is done "with a due regard to the doer's drift and conception." He has the dyspepsia, nine times out of ten; and thus he breaks a poor little butterfly like mine upon his inquisitorial wheel without benefit of jury.

I have tried, by special request, this *new*, not higher flight; for children "are of the kingdom of Heaven," while we grown folks are to be divided—some taken, others left.

Now one kind word (if in the least deserved) is a matter of no small solicitude. One drop of sympathy to a beginner, sensitive to discouragement, would be like water to the solitary traveller thirsting in the desert.

Quite dissatisfied with my work, I am certain that if you try me, even by what the lawyers call "a Court of Equity," and clients "purgatory," it will be my epitaph, and utterly disarrange and drive to sixes and sevens the ideas I am cultivating for my next much-better-book. Instead of endeavoring only to amuse, my despairing gray-goose-quill will be tempted to perpetrate a numskullical didactic fiction, which, like that dreadful creature, "a perfect pattern of a woman," will be running over with pernicious excellences, with a "sharp, horny toe of a moral sticking out at the end," instead of being a gentle, invisible



leading-string from the beginning; and my reader, my dear, lovable reader, will make up a horrible face, as the little boy did when he was feloniously induced to shut his eyes and open his mouth to receive the spoonful of jam, which had a dose of pills in the middle of it.

Consider, dear critic (*you are not dyspeptic*), while you are discussing your matutinal toast and me, that my stories, save two, are simple accounts of events happening to veritable men and women within the past year. Yes, they are all alive at this moment! Some will laugh at their pen-portraits; others will come and pinch me black and blue for *telling*. "Cousin Miranda" is much longer and stronger than I. She will probably shake the breath out of my body; or, to use her own words, shake me into "conniptions," and most likely exclaim, "What on airth do you mean printing of me? It beats all natur! It don't square with my ideas at all," and then she'll shake me again.

As to "little Mrs. Bell" (that's not her name; but she'll find me out, nevertheless), I have given orders to be particularly engaged for a month or two, when she calls. Of the rest of the good people, I am not afraid. "Little Sister," truth compels me to own, is as Mantilini says, "a demnition reality;" though I declare and protest that all I said and did, served the parties just right. "Enfant terrible" indeed! How much more terrible it would

be if an innocent child did *not* speak the truth, and shame the d with a dash. This estimable quality of my childhood has developed in my womanhood into a highly improving "faculty," as Miss Ophelia calls it, for asking questions, one of the consequences of which I have given in "The yard of black silk elastic."

The absurdity of "Corsets" was suggested by a French story, as one might surmise; and I have adapted it to the needs of a certain finical fashionable fribbler of my acquaintance, who is lacing her daughters into their very genteel graves; after which event the mother's consoling thought will be "Alas! we *must* be genteel or die—or genteel *and* die." The "Marble Bust" is a translation, very much altered; but for which, when we poor abused authors get our national and international rights, I shall offer to pay. "Buzz! buzz! buzz!" say the publishers, who do a little of this thing; "change the subject! It is getting personal!"

There is so much, dear critic (I am coaxing you now), in a name—good, bad, or assorted. Even the great Shakespeare was loveable and human, because he made mistakes. A name *is* life or death to many things. Let me tell an anecdote to illustrate:

A certain great man, you will know who by the text, announced a lecture. The people, well primed by foregone conclusions, gotten from all his previous books and lectures,

thronged the place with many dozen of gallons of laugh, bottled up, and were all eyes, ears, attention, and irresistible chuckle. The Dr. is a small man, of quick nervous movements. He jumped up like Jack in the box, and commenced by gravely announcing that this was going to be a very serious sort of thing. They all yelled with laughter! Somewhat discomposed, he proceeded to read the first line. Screams, shrieks of laughter!! By-and-by they found that it was not intended to be funny at all, and the whole thing fell as flat as a pancake.

So much for a name!!!

P. S.—Simply and earnestly, if one soul heavy with care, whirling along in a railroad car, or sitting by the winter fire, is beguiled out of its brooding grief, for an hour, by reading these stories, as mine—God be thanked!—has been out of many, by writing them; then shall I have a grateful and thankful heart, for the loving and lovable part of my intention will have been accomplished.

Adieu, or *au revoir*, as you please.





THE WIFE'S STRATAGEM.

CHAPTER I.

A PROLOGUE, IF YOU PLEASE, BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE BOOK.

"Give me a bowl of wine:
I have not that alacrity of spirit,
Nor cheer of mind, that I was wont to have."

SHAKESPEARE.

Feb. 7, 1862.—It was half after ten at night. Snow and sleet were dashing past the windows, and the angry wind howled like a wild animal.

Within, all was warm, bright, cosy. Two young persons, husband and wife, sat on either side of the fire. A small silver teakettle on the table was piping tunefully to the potent suasion of an alcohol lamp which burned beneath. A cut-glass decanter, half full of rum, a silver sugar bowl, a lemon—Halt!!! Did I say all was warm, bright, and cosy?

There was a sound of a hiccup, followed by a deep, sobbing sigh.

“Take a night-cap, dear,” said the husband. “It will make you sleep well. I sleep like a top now, thank Heaven.”

He held toward his wife the thing which Mr. Joseph Miller tells us the lawyers use when they “warm up with the subject;” “a glass concern with a spoon in it, holding about half a pint.”

“I am not sympathetic with that sort of article,” quoth she, glancing shrewishly at the spoon.

The husband understood, and felt thundery for a moment; then, remembering in time the admirable distinction which the profound and amiable Dr. Watts had impressed upon his infant mind “of the line of conduct which good Christians should follow, and that excusable, if not commendable, in bears and lions,” swallowed the coming growl and sighed again.

Presently he remonstrated—“When a fellow has lost all he is worth by those deuced Southern fellows, just as a fellow felt so comfortable! I should like to know how a fellow can help taking to nightcaps, pocket pistols, and chain lightning, and let them cheat him out of his tormenting re-

grets with a note-shaver's usury. I'll be hanged!" he continued, jerking himself up out of his chair, and plunging his hands so deep in his pockets that it made him hunch up his shoulders; "I'll be hanged if I know in six months from now where I am to get the money for dinner," and he strode to the bell, rang it violently, and ordered Betty to tell Bridget to broil the roast beef bones and devil the turkey's legs, "with plenty of red pepper, mind!" and send them up immediately.

The superstitious little wife shuddered. Broiled bones! and the devil! dear me how horrible! quite a foreshadowing of what he was coming to, if he went on in this way much longer; for the night-caps, pocket pistols, &c., nightly became longer and stronger, and the frizzling and sizzling of the broiled bones, with the frequent conjunction of that other red peppered, if not horned and cloven arrangement, was a brace of facts, the taking in of which, in a different way, was quite as stimulating to her as the edibles and drinkables to him, and would, she declared, soon drive her as crazy as a coot.

What to do. Take advice? Ask it at any rate. So the next morning the little troubled heart came

to me, kissed me, deliberately took out a clean pocket handkerchief perfumed with my favorite Marechal, and fell a-crying.

Without the faintest idea what it was all about, but determined to fulfil my duty as set forth by St. Paul, of being all things to, &c., I took out *my* clean pocket handkerchief, and sniffed in concert quite tunefully.

Presently and inevitably she blew her nose.

Pray let me ask, why, in the name of all that's high-flying, can't women cry as they do in romances? Who ever heard of these sorrowing beauties, three fourths angels, blowing their noses? Nine times out of ten they have none; at least no mention is made of them. When a lover is bending over his angel, whispering his vows, her happy tears are quietly dropping like pearls.

When *my* Fitz-Clarence offered himself, I was so glad I cried for joy; and with secret rage at the necessity, sounded a horn, which was also a death-blow as far as the romance went.

Well, then, the little wife rubbed her eyes, &c., and sighed out: "Aunt, I've come to you for help and comfort."

"And you shall have it, dear," I answered, as

I kissed her flushed cheek. Now, if you meanly seek to know if her nose was also flushed, I scorn to hesitate one moment in telling you that it *was!* very much flushed. "*We* live." She in Madison avenue, opposite the white marble church; I in Fifteenth street, near Union Park.

Advice that is to come between husband and wife requires a conjuror's skill; and sooth to say, I did not know how to begin.

While I was biting my nail to help my brains, the little wife pulled her other ungloved hand out of her muff, and began nervously turning a ring on her forefinger round and round. Then it occurred to her that I might possibly be assisted in my efforts to administer comfort if I knew why she had asked for it; and so she told me, with relapses of weeping here and there, how, as I already knew, Harry had been so well off when they were married; how everything had gone on so splendidly; the sale of goods to the South increasing, until he was quite a rich man—on paper—and he had intended to retire from business this very spring, because he loved her a thousand times more than ever since little Carrie was born, and could not bear to be separated from them all day; and then,

oh! then the dreadful war had come, and (sob) and (sob) all the happiness was over.

“Why?” I asked.

“Oh, aunt! you know how good he was! and I believe in my heart that it was because he was so good, neither drinking nor smoking, that he was successful in business. He even disliked oysters, which is almost incredible! but perhaps another reason for his many virtues (I came very near laughing at this); for oysters, you know, always go with champagne and hot whiskey punch; but now (sob) he has sent home brandy and (sob) whiskey, and oh! oh! (sob) rum. He drinks them every night, and goes to bed tip- (sob) sy; oh! what *shall* I do?”

Poor little thing! I drew my chair close to hers, and laid her head on my shoulder, and let her sob and sniff, and so forth, till she grew quiet, and then, quoth I—

“We must take him in hand, dear. We must find some pleasant distraction for his evenings.” At that moment—don't sneer, the right thing *does* happen in the right time and place, once in a blue moon, in real life—at that moment the ring she had been twisting round her finger fell off, and

rolled into a corner. I picked it up, and saw it was a circle ornamented with a very fine opal, surrounded by small but brilliant diamonds. I knew it in a moment, and a thought struck me.

“You know all about this ring?”

“I’ve read the story mamma wrote,” she answered.

“Well, I will wager a hundred dollars to a ten cent piece, that she did not tell you all the circumstances. Mothers, as a general thing, desire to maintain their normal position of awful perfectness and dignity in the eyes of their progeny. Never did they cut up capers when they were wild good-for-noth—; I mean, when they were lovely and gentle young girls! Oh no! But, nevertheless, I will just tell you all about it.

“When your mother was about sixteen, your father was distractedly in love with her; made a superfine donkey of himself on various occasions. They were both such children, that your grandmamma turned him out of the house three several times. They would take a despairing, eternal leave of each other; he would stay away one evening, on which evening she would keep up such a dismal groaning and sighing that it set everybody’s

teeth on edge, and made a thorough draught of east wind all through the house. The very next evening he would come in just as usual, leaving your grandmamma so aghast and speechless at his impudence that it seemed quite a matter of course; and the long and the short of it was, that she could not help herself, and they became engaged.

“As to your grandpapa, he examined his favorite authority, Shakespeare, and with that assistance gravely came down upon his wife with

“ ‘Didst thou but know the inly touch of love,
Thou wouldst as soon go kindle fire with snow
As seek to quench the fire of love with words.’

“After a while your father declared that he could not exist another moment without your mother's miniature, to stare at all day long, when he ought to be studying law; so she went, after he had settled the preliminaries, to a Mrs. Bogardus, who painted miniatures admirably on ivory.

“This was not the momentary posing to his majesty the sun, who is miniature painter to all the world, his wife and children, in these times. Your mother went every day for a month, and being a tormenting gipsy, made faces, sat awry, shut one

eye, and otherwise disported herself, till Mrs. Bogardus was half crazy—so many-sided was the expression of her sitter's face.

“ It was in summer time, and through the crack of the wide open door a young gentleman, brother to Mrs. Bogardus, gazed on the sitter and listened to her chatter. He heard her say on one occasion that she wrote poetry—she meant rhymes, young poetry, ‘ veal.’ As he was an editor of a magazine, he preferred a request through his sister, that the lively little sprite should write something for him. What an honor! to appear in print! She blushed and smiled, but being somewhat afraid of venturing on poetry for the public eye, offered a story instead; and shutting herself up in her own room, so her mother should not find her out, wrote the ‘ Opal Ring.’ It was a comical story, and more of it true than you imagine; and now I’ll tell you what to try. Harry is quite a genius in inventing odd stories; he wants something to do, which will take his mind off of his troubles in the evenings. Propose to him to organize a club of half a dozen or more persons, whose brains are something besides train oil and dough. Harry, to begin, will take this story of the “ Opal Ring,” improve it all he can;

put in some more of the dreadful things they tell you I, your grave aunt, did, when a child, and you must coax Harry to add something original of his own. Then have one evening in the week for the meeting together and readings. After your story, I will present one; and all the rest, fired by a desire for emulation, like geese following one another across a road, will each write their possible, which may not, will not, resemble that useful, silly bird in any other respect. And if it should, dear child! if we should all charge our pens with nonsense, provided it be innocent and for a good purpose, we have the Divine promise that 'the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,' and a brave, resolute, undaunted little Monitor like you, will, with His blessing, so cripple the monsters we are fighting against that your husband himself will light the match that will destroy what is left. Keep this up as long as you can. The beginning of the end of this wretched conflict is at hand, and then Harry will get something to do. Encourage him, cheer him, laugh at him, make light of all deprivations which may be necessary—yes! even seem to get on better with them. Meet him at the very door when he comes home, with a kiss and a smile; and above

all with little Carrie in your arms ; that will be a great gun ! Be a little hypocrite, my poor darling ! If your heart is heavy, sing ; if you are on the point of bursting out crying, say something remarkably funny. *You*, poor little soul ! must be strong-hearted for two ; and the other six feet high. Oh it *is* hard ! but it is the lot of a good wife to do moonshine by night, and sunshine by day, be the clouds as black as Erebus, and bitter strokes of fortune falling like thunderbolts on every side."

Stop ! What was I doing ? Babbling like a fool, all on the dark side of things. So I resisted further temptation in this line, and chirped inspiritingly about our plan.

"Oh ! Aunt, do you think I could do anything so delightful ?"

"Try," I cried ; "begin to-night. Let me see. Let's recapitulate : You and little Carrie at the door. Kisses. The dining-room. Bright fire. Nice little dinner. Carrie at dessert ; previously taught to say, I love papa *mostest*. Of course he will remonstrate with you for teaching her to say so, and be immensely delighted, nevertheless.

"After dinner, a kiss ; a remarkably funny thing

Carrie said or did during the day, to which he will listen with ears like a hare's; and roars of laughter. Then propose THE PLAN, with judicious hints of the immortal fame *he* will acquire if he puts only quarter the funny things he says in writing; quite put out such smaller lights as Sydney Smith, Charles Lamb, &c. Never mind his slang of 'I don't seem to see it;' keep up a perfect volley of coaxings, till he puts pen to paper. He is really such a clever fellow that once get him there, you are safe and he is saved. There!! What do you think?"

How her face brightened! She looked *so* lovely! the unbecoming red tint had left her poor, innocent nose, and settled upon her cheeks, and after kissing and thanking me, she bade me "good-by," and tripped home, a happy, comforted little woman.

That night, if the welcome footsteps approaching outside were not listened for by two small pretty pink ears, surmounted by a little killing French cap, then set me down for a regular ninny-hammer! The programme, as printed above, was enacted and *not acted*, con amore. A capital little dinner, crowned by his favorite dessert,

meringue apple pie, was discussed with immense satisfaction. Then Carrie came in with the astounding "I love you *mostest*, papa," exactly at the critical moment; for the little wife, with a sinking heart, had observed that he was looking at the decanter on the buffet, and had half risen to get it. The sweet, small voice seemed to be heaven-inspired. He stopped short! turned; looked at his little child, then taking her in his arms fairly burst into tears, crying: "Oh! Carrie, my darling, I have beggared both you and your mother; don't love me! don't love me! Oh! my God! how unhappy I am!"

She flew to him, that good little wife! She curled her arms round his neck. One gasping sob, and then she said bravely, "Oh! no, Harry! not ruined, while we have you and you have us. See! we will help each other! we are young! we are strong! This dreadful war cannot last forever! if we have to struggle a few years, our being together will make privations sweet. Let me discharge every servant but one. I own the house; that is so fortunate, isn't it, dear?" (kissing him). I shall soon learn to do without a great many things; indeed, so many servants are very

troublesome; and my health really requires that I should take more exercise round the house, you know (little hypocrite). Come, don't you see we are not so badly off. Besides, I have a plan (here she spoke very fast), a capital plan, for our evenings;" and she told him, in her own loving, coaxing way, what we had concocted together.

Only a heart of marble could have resisted her. Harry's was flesh and blood; it was bleeding a little now; for her agitation, and involuntary glancing at the awful decanter—her sweet face, now deadly pale, now crimson, with alternate fear and hope—showed him how cruelly he had wounded the true heart which beat only for him. Yes! he saw it all, with the same bright, sensitive intelligence that had won his fortune and his wife; with the same intelligence which gave a sharper edge to that fratricidal Southern sword, which had not only robbed him of his honest gains, but cut many cords asunder far more precious than gold, and had driven him to the miserable madness of flying to strong drink to obtain temporary forgetfulness; and now, wretch that he was! he was doing his best to disgust his wife and forfeit his dearest earthly possession—her love.

All these thoughts went through him like a sword, keener, more unsparing than the first; and there and then he made a solemn, silent vow, and sealed it with a kiss upon the innocent lips of his little child. Then he smiled upon her, and little Carrie sang again, with her sweet robin's note, "I love you *mostest*, papa!"

Cunning little Carrie!!!

And so the plan, the great plan, succeeded. Harry went head, hand, and brain into the work that same evening. No silver teakettle was visible with its ominous hissing; no horrible decanter of rum stood sentinel upon the table, like an advance-guard of Beelzebub, charged to the muzzle and ready to pour death into him. A little joyous chirrup from his wife made music as he wrote. Steadily, he wrote for four—oh what pleasant quiet evenings! and then the first story was finished. Courage, little wife! The enemy is repulsed.

CHAPTER II.

A GRAND CONSULTATION OF THREE.

“WHO shall we invite to become members of our club?”

“I propose Mr. and Mrs. Wilton,” I answered. “She is piquante, pretty, witty, and the best of all, a delicious little vixen. He is good-humored, good-tempered, and good-looking.”

Unanimously elected; and Harry immediately wrote a note, which I may as well add here, was answered “delighted to come.”

“There’s young Appreciate,” suggested Harry, “one of the few of ‘Young America’ who have not crooked legs, are not forever twisting their mustaches, and pulling up their shirt collars. I know he says his prayers. *Mirabile dictu!*”

Ah! that last piece of information was an *argumentum ad hominem* to the little wife, for she immediately cried out—

"Says his prayers? Oh yes! Appreciate! Have *him* by all means!"

"God boy!" I echoed. He prays, as we all do, *pro aris et focis.*" You see I wanted to show Harry what a tremendous scholar I was, so I fired at him one of the three Latin phrases I knew. The effect I produced was satisfactory.

"We must have a young lady as vis-a-vis to our young gentleman. I should like to invite my sweet young cousin Adelaide, aunt. It is true she is only fifteen, but she talks more pearls and diamonds than many women I know twice her years, and twenty times her conceit."

"She is all that you say, dear. My darling is one in a thousand, simple, natural, and noble; and I, her mother, can say this to you without fear of being laughed at for blind partiality."

"Cousin Adelaide is only one remove from an angel, and I know, just as well as if it had already taken place, what will happen," said Harry. "We will introduce Appreciate. She will give him a curtsy and a smile so brimful of sunshine, that he will be struck motionless with admiration—the usual figure very young men cut on such occasions. She will make a highly common-

place remark, at which he will flush all over and quake about the knees. Love at first sight! You see? and in six weeks I'll bet a hat he will ask her to share his 'home and gizzard.'

"Aren't you ashamed?" laughed "the little wife," whose face fairly beamed at the prospect of a love affair, which she mentally resolved to further with might and main, as if one stratagem on her hands, at one time, were not enough. "How can you spoil all the romance with your 'gizzard.' Dear little Adelaide! Won't it be delightful, aunty, to make such a nice match for her?"

"Oh very," I snapped, for I did not like to have Adelaide so unceremoniously appropriated. "And so everybody must have somebody, but me. You two turtledoves, Mr. and Mrs. Wilton, Appreciate and Adelaide. Who's to do the civil to *me*, I should like to know?"

"Hm!" said Harry, with a malicious sparkle in his eyes. "There's that crusty, cynical, amusing, peregrinating volcano, old Mr. Gracie Growler, who seems to consider it his mission to pitch into everything, from Alpha to Omega. I wish you could have heard him in his counting-room the other day, blazing away at his sister, because she laced up her



PORTRAIT OF MR. GROWLER.



daughters till they creaked at the least movement, and breathed in short puffs, like propellers. He declared it was 'high pressure' with two d's for introductory epithet; and ended by shouting out, 'No! not one grain, sir! of the salt which chains down and laces up consciences, lungs, free speech, true religion, or slaves, shall rest on the glorious tail of *my* Bird of Liberty! No, sir! Conventionalities, French corsets, and Mrs. Grundy be hanged! Dirt, somebody has written, is only a conventionality, sir. Don't dirt make corn and grass? Answer me that! don't grass make fat oxen? don't fat oxen and corn make the pretty young lady. I saw you kissing the other day?' facing round upon young Appreciate, who turned all sorts of colors. 'Yes, sir! There's those girls of my silly sister's, nearly cut in two! they look like wasps with the toothache. *Cui bono?*'

"I can tell you," continued Harry, "he's a great card; and then his grumpiness will set off aunty's sweetness and amiability."

"Very good buncombe, that last," said I, by way of concealing how pleased I was with his flattery. "Mr. Growler will make eight—just a pleasant number; and, as most of our stories are in fact

but one family history, we shall enjoy them with intense zest."

"Well, then, it's all settled," chirped the little wife, "I'm so grateful to you, dear aunty! darling old general! But—and—oh! How about having refreshments? You know we can't afford—now—to—" she stopped.

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed, "Who wants *pate-de-foie-gras* and champagne? Still, I believe the feast of reason and flow of soul is generally voted, even by æsthetic people, as an æriform fluid, delightful to take, but a little too thin for the digestive organs, considered materially. So we will have some chocolate and sponge cake; and if you think the men folks are above eating cake, as childish and womanish, have some mannish sandwiches, made after *my* receipt."

"Certainly! No red pepper, I hope?"

"No, mustard. And now, *voilà!* When you eat other people's sandwiches you may be morally and physically certain that in fourteen times out of fourteen you draw about a quarter of a yard of ham out at the first bite. The ham depends elegantly from the corner of your mouth, until by a series of frantic chewings and tearings with your fingers—

it suddenly drops. This is decidedly unpleasant. Now! Have a nice boiled ham; cut a sufficient quantity of fat and lean, in great slices; put these in a chopping-bowl, and chop them into a fine paste. Then mix well with it, for two pounds of ham, two tablespoonfuls of Maille's French mustard; cut the bread thin; butter it; and spread it thick with the ham; put two slices together; the one who says this sandwich is not delicious, must be a salamander without a looking-glass.*

"That sounds good!" cried Harry, jumping up with great energy. "Why aunty, you must be the veritable 'Admirable Crichton' disguised in petticoats! What *don't* you know, I should like to know?"

"I do know we shall have some very pleasant evenings with all these friendly faces and kind hearts around us. As to Mr. Growler, I know him better than you do. His bark is ever so much worse than his bite. His sister told me the other day that he came home perfectly miserable because

* We advise all husbands, sons, and brothers to get the authorities at home to give them an opportunity to test these admirable sandwiches. We are certain they will declare that the receipt is worth the whole price of the book.—PUB.

he had not provided himself with pennies enough to give to all the little tatterdemalions that sweep the crossings, 'Short by four,' he whined, in great tribulation, 'I thought thirty-one would be enough.' 'Nasty little wretches!' *she* ejaculated, 'what does he bother his head about them for?'"

"Ah," said Harry. "That is the woman that is lacing her daughters to death. What can you expect from a 'a heart of stone?'"

"And a wooden head," I added; "but seems to me we are getting scandalous; I move that this meeting adjourn."

CHAPTER III.

“Now came still evening on.” *The evening!* and the little wife’s stratagem was fast ripening to its first fruition. Everything was ready. She had made mountains of sandwiches. The delicate sponge cake all brown and golden, had been cut in generous pieces and piled high in the silver basket; and the chocolate was primed ready for fire. But the little foot nervously patted the carpet; the brow, though resolute, was knit with care. A prayer was in her heart; and two rebellious tears, that would not be choked back, brimmed over, and rolled quietly down her cheeks. What was to be a simple amusement for an evening to the guests, was a venture bringing happiness or misery to her.

Quickly brushing away the obtruding tears, she looked up at her husband with a smile—the deep little woman! and said gayly, “Dear old fellow! We shall have a right pleasant evening, I’m sure!”

He was very busy putting forgotten commas and dashes in his manuscript, and said "yes" in an absent manner. Then he laughed over one of the pages, as if the joke therein was good; and then he drew a long, doubtful sigh.

"Hang it!" he said, "I'm afraid our readings will be a fac-simile of those of the Historical Society. Did you order chocolate?"

"Certainly, dear. But what is the connection between historical readings and chocolate?"

"Connection? Plenty!"

"Plenty of reading or plenty of chocolate?"

"Both; but the chocolate is to take the taste of the reading out of my mouth, as the little boy said, when he rushed up furiously to kiss his pretty cousin, to take away the taste of the kiss his mother obliged him to give his grim schoolma'am, to prove he was sorry for being naughty.

"You see they invariably read some long-winded paper about a cracked old shaving cup or the like, which somebody has dug up, and swears it belonged to Gen. Washington. Of course, the necessary development of this interesting fact, requires a synopsis of the world from the beginning, for don't you see, if there hadn't been any world, there in-

dubitably would not have been any shaving pot. This goes on snoringly for three quarters of an hour, when there comes a mysterious odor of chocolate on the blast. The orator sniffs, and incontinently skips two pages, which, like the history of Sir Charles Grandison, does not disturb the connection in the least; as you may go fast asleep while one of those novels are being read, and wake up half an hour after, to find the company 'still conversing in the red cedar parlor.'

"But the delicious aroma becomes stronger. The audience is seized with scraping of feet, violent coughing and wriggling in their seats; each member fastening one wishful eye upon the door, the other blazing indignation at the speaker.

"Then the orator pauses irresolutely; turns over several pages; wishes somebody would blow the shaving cup sky high in a powder magazine to get rid of it; when the president, who is famous for his *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*, comes gallantly and elegantly to the rescue, and in that silvery, delightful voice, so full of courtesy and persuasion, observes that 'the intensely interesting paper before us, which will rescue from oblivion the remarkable shaving cup whose history, enriched by profound

political, metaphysical, and geological speculations, beginning from the earliest ages, and investing the *very* remarkable shaving cup with added grandeur, is necessarily of a length which might very properly be divided into two readings; I therefore move [looking out of the corner of his eye at the orator, who winks approval]—I move that the reading of this admirable paper be divided into two parts [sudden and enthusiastic applause!]; and, as we seem to have come to—a—pause, I move that we do now adjourn.' Seconded, amid tremendous applause, and in two minutes after that, the thirsty souls are following the scent with the precision of hunters. The chocolate proves the reading to have been marvellously edifying, and everybody goes away praising the very interesting *paper*."

The little wife laughed heartily, and then scolded him well for making her laugh at so dignified a subject and corporation,—when there came the first ring of the bell, like the first gun at a battle.

As a matter of course, she sprang to the mirror and smoothed down an imaginary crimple in her satiny braids, and pulled a plait of her skirt one sixteenth part of an inch the opposite way. One's toilet is never complete without that sort of thing!

Then she flew to Harry for a kiss, and got it ; also, a look full of tenderness and promise, and then the little coward awaited the first arrival with outward confidence and inward trembling. Ah ! the good people little knew what they were helping to do. Helping to save her husband from that demoniac FRIEND which has caused more misery, disease, and crime, than plague, pestilence or famine. That awful fiend, INTemperance ! yet alas ! there is scarcely a family but must shudder and blush at the name ! the ghastly skeleton letters of which stares at them from their very hearthstones.

Successive rings of the house bell announced all the company. Courtesies exchanged, I begged Harry to begin the reading. I saw the quivering lip of the little wife, and well understood the nervous gayety of her manner. Harry, too, felt twitchy, when he looked at her ; and I heard him murmur, while pretending to arrange his manuscript, " Poor little heart ! so grieved ! " and he bent his shapely head and sighed remorsefully.

But the company had settled themselves into listening attitudes ; the one silent expectant moment, which always occurs, had passed, and Harry began as follows :

CHAPTER IV.

LITTLE SISTER,

Or how a little woman, six years of age, was at the bottom of the mischief.

AN O'ER TRUE TALK.

AT one of the windows of a certain house in Madison Square, one lovely afternoon in June, sat a young lady of a most bewitching but mischievous aspect. The splendors of an American sunset flooded earth and heaven ; and the glowing, changing tints were lingering so caressingly upon the creamy richness of the young girl's complexion, and amid the lustrous blackness of her hair, that they invested her for the nonce with a spiritual and dream-like beauty.

But do not believe that the little dark-eyed witch deserved to be the idol of a poet's dream. Not a bit of it. Though a very charming fairy, a more tormenting sprite never plagued the heart of man ; but by the blessed rule of compensation, which

sometimes obtains, even on this contumacious planet, I shall presently show that she met with her deserts at the hands of another woman; albeit that other woman was so aggravatingly young as to be beyond the pale of the law, as practised by her sex; namely, retaliation in kind; for be it known, that ordinary shakings and slappings, pinchings and pullings are of no avail in these cases; the victim can only exhibit a dogged and exasperated resignation, and breathe an inward prayer that these small brigands in petticoats may at some future time meet with their most abundant reward.

We left Tiny (for that was her pretty diminutive name) sitting at the window. In her hand was a velvet slipper, which she was embroidering for "nobody," *she* said. Just at present the work was not progressing. She was restless. If the door bell rang, the quick blood would rush to her cheeks, her eyes dilate, and her beautiful head would be poised in an eager, listening, expectant (may I say?) stag-like attitude. With each disappointment the head would droop, and a shadow pass over her sweet face. It was plain that somebody was coming—ought to have come already—and would suffer when he (of course "*he*") did

come, for keeping her waiting. Alas! poor fellow, I am affrighted for him.

But at length an impetuous pull at the bell was heard. Then what happened? The pretty head was gracefully inclined again, a sweet voice murmured "Dear, dear Frank! come at last!" there was a fresh access of rich color to the cheek, a sigh of relief, and a nervous trembling quickly suppressed by a *will*.

Almost immediately a tall, elegant young man rushed into the room. He was saluted with a cool "What's the matter that you are in such a violent hurry? Has a powder mill exploded next door?"

"Oh Tiny!" he exclaimed, seizing her hand, regardless of her bantering, "I'm so glad, *so glad* to be with you at last! how beautiful you look!" (Tiny made a face at him.) "Don't do that! you are too enchanting already." (Tiny pouted.) "Oh good gracious! don't pout with that rosebud of a mouth, or I shall—"

But he didn't! for she snatched her hand away, and with blazing eyes ejaculated, "Mr. Strange! *behave!*" and he behaved accordingly, and the kiss was postponed. Tiny was—well—she was—slightly disappointed.

"Will you not walk out with me as you promised, Tiny?" said Frank.

"It is too late," she answered, "you were to have been here an hour ago;" and here he received an angry eyebeam.

"Don't look daggers! If you only knew what detained me! but I won't tell. I shall only be laughed at, and I have had quite enough of that already, and all your fault too!"

"No, you don't say so! Ah now do tell me!" said the young girl, coaxingly. I promise not to laugh. I'll be as grave as an owl, or the gravest of the judges before whom you argue your cases. I'll look as solemn as Judge Betts, Judge Clerke, and Judge Daly all put together! do, please, *dear Frank.*"

Those two last words were prostrating, as an inevitable matter of course; and he began his confession in a stuttering, stammering way, that caused Tiny's wicked eyes to dance with delight; for she was certain something good was coming.

"You must know, then," he began, "that I had a confounded declaration of breach of contract to make out—over seventy pages; and the defendant's name occurred, as is usual, about 999 times,

and—and—instead of declaring and stating and averring, as I ought, that the said defendant 'Smith,' promised and undertook and agreed and all the rest of it, and 'wilfully refused and refrained from keeping his said promise, and undertaking, and agreement'—why—I got thinking about you, you know, and how many times *you* had broken *your* promises, and—in short" (here he looked deprecatingly at her)—"now don't laugh, Smith was changed to 'Tiny' wherever the name of that thief of a Smith ought to have occurred, until the whole seventy pages were perfectly peppered with Tinies. Well, when the counsel had read a few lines, he rubbed his eyes and looked bewildered, the jury rubbed their ears, and looked befogged, and the judge took off his spectacles and looked indignant; while I, of course, was horrified, scarified, and petrified, and stood staring at the counsel with my mouth open like a post office; my very soul was in fits! Visions of lunatic asylums, schools in an uproar, camp meetings, and earthquakes, rushed wildly through my brain; until a tremendous "WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?" from the judge brought up my wandering thoughts with a jerk! and I endeavored to explain that it was a most unaccountable mistake, a

complete mystery to *me*; but I suppose I blushed like a perfect fool; my face was the color of a stick of sealing wax or of official tape; and when the judge asked me in a slow and frightfully distinct tone, 'Do—you—know—any—lady—whose Christian name is Tiny?' I stammered out 'Y—e—s,' like *such* a donkey! and then everybody roared, screamed, and yelled with laughter; and I ran as if a hundred and fifty mad bulls were after me! Of course I had to copy the confounded document over again, and I sat up all last night to do it."

Do not think that Frank told all this without interruption; Tiny laughed till she cried, and sooth to say Frank joined her; so upon the whole, our young lawyer felt comforted that he had ventured the confession; and, as his next question will show, basely endeavored to make capital of the sufferings he had endured in behalf of the lady of his love.

"After all this, you *will* say you care a little for me, Tiny, will you not? only a little for me."

"No! indeed I will not! Care for you? not an atom!" And that was all the comfort he got.

"Ah Tiny, how *can* you say 'No' so savagely? It is cruel! when you are perfectly well aware that I am exactly like Miles Standish—" and here he

struck a mock-heroic attitude, and with the approved pump-handle gesture recited :

“ ‘ I ’ m not afraid of bullets, or shot from the mouth of a cannon—
But of a thundering *NO!* point blank from the mouth of a
woman.’ ”

“ Your unkindness,” he continued, “ is really wearing me into holes ; my heart presents the appearance of a potato steamer, which is not a steamship, as perhaps you may fancy ; but a great tin pan full of great round holes ; Berrian asks half a dollar for them ; I bought one for my mother to-day, and she said I gave sixpence too much.”

“ Make a ‘ merry Andrew,’ as old Mrs. Gosling calls it,” said Tiny, “ in your note-book ; and charge it in your costs, in the next *declaration* you make.”

“ Declaration ! My next declaration I make to *you*. Hear me, ye gods and little fishes—I mean adorable Tiny, while I give utterance for the eighty-fifth time, to my unutterable love. I love you to distraction—no lover ever loved, might, could, would or should ever love as I love you ; and yet this very week you have made eight cruel speeches ; they have all stabbed me to the heart, every one of them mortal.”

“Poor fellow,” laughed Tiny; “killed eight times, and so very lively notwithstanding; why are you like a cat? because you have nine lives; you would make eighty-one tailors; what a loss to the community. Now don’t pull such a long face; your chin is coming down all over your vest, and hiding the pattern. What *is* the pattern? Looks like sharks running after small fry—very good pattern for a lawyer; now don’t look so dreadful. Start up, strike an attitude, and with your hand on that mortally wounded heart repeat after me, “Madam, since you are so cruel and so cross, and so on, and so forth, say the word, and I shall be only too happy to die, *sine die*.”

What an incorrigible little woman! But her punishment was coming; for her little sister, a child of six years, who had been listening to the conversation with wide-awake ears, while apparently absorbed in running pins into the hapless brain of a grimy-faced doll, to fasten her wig on more securely,—her little sister came up to Frank, and drawing his face down to hers, and putting her rosy lips close to his ears, lisped out, before Tiny could prevent her:

“Sister Tiny tell me she love you *dearly*; she

did! there!" and then marched back in all the glow of a meritorious action.

Frank went straight up to the seventh heaven! "Ah, now I've caught you," he exclaimed, seizing the blushing girl's hands, and gently forcing her back on her chair, "Don't run away! you are my prisoner now! you *must*, you *shall* tell it to me yourself."

Tiny resisted gallantly, protesting that it was all a mistake, and entreating him to release her hand, and hold his tongue; she declared that little Kate had not heard distinctly ("You imp of mischief!" this aside to Kate) *it was of somebody else* she had spoken. (Oh what a terrible fib she told then.)

But Frank was not to be deceived; he only grasped her hands tighter, and she was obliged to give up the vain endeavor, telling him half angrily that he was too bad.

"I do not object to your declaring that I am 'too bad,' for I have lately heard that when you ladies say we are 'too bad,' you mean, we are not bad enough."

"Audacious," cried Tiny, snatching away her hands, "then I desire to assure you that you are

not too bad, but you are most particularly disagreeable, and I do wish you would go and sit *there!*" pointing to the farthest corner of the room.

"Thank you. I will do precisely as you *wish,*" returned the provoking Frank, with a scarcely perceptible accent on the last word; and he gently insinuated himself upon part of her chair, and passed his arm round her waist.

The now really indignant girl gave him *such* a look! She sprang from her chair, while an angry, crimson flush rolled in quick tides over face and neck, exclaiming, "I did not deserve this, *Mr. Strange,*" and her large and beautiful brown eyes were floated in tears.

A woman's tears! and from beautiful eyes! Down on his knees went Frank, utterly regardless of the damage done to the set of Derby's last brilliant effort in the pantaloon line, and clamored out, "Oh! Tiny, forgive me! do forgive me! I'm a wretch! I know I am! but I am charged up to the very muzzle, I mean to the very end of my moustache, with remorse for my sins. Never, no never will I leave off talking until I have your forgiveness! I've nearly sprained my tongue talking already! Oh Tiny, you are the very pink and pat-

tern of perfection, and I am one mass of crimes! Don't laugh! Oh dear! All is over! I'll send back the lock of your hair in a despairing cocked-hat note and the very edges of the paper shall be singed with my wording burns, I mean burning burns! Pshaw! burning words! I don't know what I am saying! but if you wish to avert insanity, you will forgive me *now*."

The "pink of perfection" listened to this torrent of eloquence with rather a skeptical air; but after kissing little Kate (between you and me she was not *very* angry with her), and telling her she was a very little woman, to be at the bottom of so much mischief, she informed Frank that he might consider himself forgiven; and the lovers' incipient quarrel ended as lovers' quarrels generally end. If you do not know how that is, don't imagine for a moment that I intend telling; only Tiny this time—well—she was *not* disappointed, and Frank walked on air all the way home.

You have found out, dear reader, with that extraordinary intelligence which *you* only possess (as the lawyers always tell the jury), that Tiny Stanley at seventeen, was a delightful mixture of seriousness and frolic, romantic ideas and common sense. She

and little Kate were the only surviving children of Mr. Stanley, a merchant of considerable fortune; residing, as I have told you, on Madison Square.

Mr. Stanley was universally esteemed for his strict integrity in business and loved for his kind heart; and was perfectly well known on 'Change as the obliging old gentleman in an old coat and a queue. Brigadier-General Spisir, the distinguished auctioneer, called him "Baked Pears," because his face was brown and wrinkled; but he would not allow *any one else* to do so, as they were old friends; and Mr. Stanley in return, called him "Baked Beans."

There was a tearful romance connected with that queue, comical as it looked, for the old gentleman *would* wear the old-fashioned high coat collar, and of course, the queue stood up in the air like a signal. But, as I have said, there was a tearful romance about that long hair, which, as I am just now in a trifling humor, I shall not tell; suffice it to say that it was never to be cut, and he had requested that it should be buried with him; and one of these days (a distant one, I hope) you will see it, like Washington Irving's Dutchman's queue, sticking out of a hole in his coffin.

The good man had a thorough contempt for speculating; nothing would have induced him to take over seven per cent. for his money. "Slow and sure" was his motto. He met every misfortune and inconvenience with the greatest coolness, or as he said, "like a philosopher;" was passionately fond of "Peregrine Pickle," "Gil Blas," and "my Uncle Toby;" and as to Shakespeare, he knew him by heart, and quoted him on all occasions, right or wrong.

Indeed, so great was his loving admiration for the written works of the wondrous man whose name is for "all time," that he named his children after his favorite characters. Thus the two surviving were called respectively "Titania," from "Midsummer Night's Dream," and "Katharina," from "The Taming of the Shrew." But the queenly appellation had been lovingly shortened to "Tiny," a name which seemed made for the dear little witch, and Katharina was forgotten in "Kitty," or "Kate."

Mrs. Stanley was a marvellously pleasant, credulous, good-natured old lady, as one might perceive by the absence of right angles in her face and person. If you had been abroad you might convince

her without much trouble that all other travellers' stories were travellers' license, in which, like poets' license, there was more imagination than fact; she would then believe, if you chose to tell her, that Cleopatra's needle was the original sewing machine, and the Pyramids stood on their points, which circumstance, and no other, made them a world's wonder. The good old lady had extremely strict notions of propriety, and was rather too apt to judge from appearances; indeed this last-mentioned trait almost amounted to a fault. But notwithstanding these foibles, *Mrs.* Stanley was in most things a very sensible woman, and preferred that her daughters' education should be solid rather than accomplished; and as soon as Tiny had left school, she proceeded at once to initiate the young lady into the unfashionable mysteries of brooms and baking.

Her first pies made quite an era in the family history. She had achieved the making and the baking so much to her satisfaction, that she insisted on one of these wonderful pies being produced on the evening of the day of this remarkable performance.

Frank had come to tea; also two other young gentlemen, all hopelessly in love with Tiny.

“Are you the gentleman with the straw-colored

hair and the hay-colored whiskers?" asked Kate in a slow whisper of one of the lovers—a bashful man.

The young noodle blushed painfully. "What makes your ears so red; have you painted them?" continued the dreadful child. "What makes you stare so at that blue flower in the carpet? sister Tiny said the other day you would wear the carpet into holes."

The victim gnashed his teeth, and said, "Ah! yes; did she? how very funny! ha! ha! (then aside) I'll go; I won't be laughed at; I'll go home and shoot myself." But he was a downy fellow, and in love, and so he stayed, and muttered under his breath, "Ugh! you young griffin! why don't you go to bed?" Kitty did not go to bed, but she moved off near Mr. Jones, the other lover, and sat twinkling her eyes like an imp of supernatural intelligence, and looking alternately at her own chubby legs and his.

Alas! Frank had set her thinking about those legs; and upon that she spake, holding up her foot at him, and (cunning thing) whispering:

"See here, Mr. Jones, I say! *I* have not got legs like knitting needles. Why do you have them?"

The new victim started; a convulsive spasm seized his legs; he felt something like the ringing of bells in his ears at this unexpected compliment, and had a delirious idea of running some one through with a red-hot poker or a bayonet; but neither instrument of vengeance being at hand, he bottled up his wrath, and walked away to Tiny, who was talking and laughing with her mother and Frank, happily unconscious of the latest exploits of this innocent cherub.

But the wonderful pie was now put in great state and glory upon the table, and the company gathered round. Tiny felt her plumes shaking when her father, after an ineffectual attempt with a knife upon the crust, with portentous solemnity requested that the hatchet might be brought from the lower regions.

Oh what a pie was that! It was as tough as a law book, both inside and out; but in spite of Tiny's entreaties (for little Kate had declared that her sister had said she would *never* forgive them if they did not eat the whole of it), the lovers despatched the pie to the last crumb, making most incredible efforts to out-do and out-eat each other; consequently Frank was ill three days; Mr. Jones

for a week, besides breaking a back tooth ; and the bashful man's life was despaired of for a fortnight. When at last he became convalescent, he rushed without a scrap of courage, but a great deal of desperation, into Tiny's presence, and insisted on her accepting him for the " dangers he had passed."

He married a widow twenty years older than himself, a month afterward ; so I need not mention the result of that interview.

I am afraid the list of little Miss Tiny's accomplishments will disgust fashionable Miss Flora McFlimsey, who lives on the other side of Madison Square.

She could *not* sing " Casta Diva " or " Ah, mon fils " in a way to make the very hair of your head stand on end, to the utter confusion of time and tune, which, like time and tide, wait or alter for no man. She could not sing them in that way (which you all know is the most fashionable way) or any other ; but she could and did take sweet little bits of poetry from Tennyson, or Gerald Massey and set them to music of her own composing, and sing them in a liquid voice, full of delicious little trills and carols, enough to make a lark die of envy ; and then she played " the Lancers," and polkas, &c.,

and kept perfect time, which some of my readers will admit is, a rare accomplishment.

She could dance without wings as lightly as a fairy with them ; tell ghost stories with startling effect ; and wrote puzzles, parodies, and acrostics for all her friends.

If this were a story made of moonshine, I should describe Tiny, of course, as ravishingly beautiful—and tell a fib—for she was no such thing. Her features, though softly moulded, were not regular, but all the more piquant for that. Hers was the beauty of an ever-varying expression, which, with a pair of large black eyes—teeth whose whiteness and glitter were heightened in effect from the contrast to her coral lips—clear brown skin and shining black hair, made her pass among those who loved her, for her beauty. Besides, she was exactly five feet high, and that, Frank maintained, was the only true standard.

That gentleman of tormenting and repenting memory was an orphan ; he had commenced his existence, according to his own account, on the happy day when he first became acquainted with Tiny, which was about a year before he was admitted to the bar. He was very good looking, but

so tall and slender that one of his college chums thought he might answer on an emergency for the mainmast of a revenue cutter, with close-reefed top-sails, as his ears were particularly small.

It was very fortunate that Frank had had two years' previous study, while yet an unfledged lawyer in his years of indiscretion, for during his third and last year, when he had become "Tiny's victim" (I use his own words), his time had been principally occupied in staring at the outside of his books, writing love letters to Tiny, and making sonnets on her soft eyes. He himself considered the profundity of his love as quite unfathomable, and that nothing like it had ever been known before. They were both very young and very happy, and scarcely looked beyond the present. They were really engaged—and some time or other were to be married. But Tiny was in no hurry for that; and often congratulated herself like a wicked, cruel little woman as she was, that she had plenty of time to make him jealous, and intended to tease him to her heart's content.

It was perfectly surprising how Frank contrived to start up like a ghost, in the most sudden and unexpected manner in the street any and every

day, ten minutes after Tiny had left the house. Probably he invested his loose cash in a two-legged telegraph, who whistled her advent all the way down to his office.

One pleasant Sunday morning he joined her as usual on her way to church. Little Kate was with her. Frank had been lying in wait for some time, and as he came up his face was radiant with pleasure.

"Well, Frank," said Kitty, "your eyes *are* as big as carriage lamps! sister Tiny was right."

Frank's face fell to zero. "Did you say that, Miss Stanley?" he asked.

"Oh! good gracious, no I didn't, yes, I did, but (oh! you goblin") pinching the child; "but, that don't prevent your eyes being *handsome*," she said with a sideways glance at his angry face; "dear Frank, I say such things sometimes, you know, to hide how much I really—really—"

"So she does," cried Kitty, "she hides things from me; she told the cook the other day, not to say, 'Oh my stars and what's his names' before me. What *are* 'what's his names,' Frank?"

Frank laughed; Tiny said, "Oh! I shall never survive it! what a young one!" and harmony was

restored ; but the young lady was fearful of a relapse ; so she said :

“ Now, Frank, I really think you had better not go to church with me this morning ; I have promised to sing with the choir up stairs ; and if I leave you and Kitty down stairs, something dreadful will be sure to happen.”

“ Not at all,” returned Frank. “ I will prevent all that. How can you have any apprehensions ? when you know that I am universally spoken of as the wisest man, next to Solomon. I found out the law of gravity before I was a year old, by falling out of a second-story window, and I am in hourly expectation of discovering the lever Archimedes wanted, when I shall immediately turn the world topsy turvy. In the mean time eleven young ladies will die of disappointment, if I don't make my appearance, especially as I have on this new and splendid vest. I invented the pattern myself. What do you think of it ? ”

“ It's perfectly hideous,” said Tiny, “ I should think you might make money by lending it out on hire to the people who dress up scarecrows.”

“ No such thing,” cried little Kate, “ sister Tiny says you are beautiful, if you only had a little more

calf; what does *that* mean? I want to know; say."

"Oh what a story," said Tiny, blushing to the roots of her hair, and not daring to look up or laugh. "You little pitcher! you magpie! your ears are prodigious! I shall plan an excursion for you up the chimney the next time I wish to amuse myself talking nonsense."

While Kate was feeling her ears to ascertain the size, with a vague, distressful look that made her companion laugh, in spite of Frank's being nettled at this last brilliant sally—they arrived at the church, and with an earnest whispered admonition to the little one to keep perfectly still, Tiny mounted to her musical perch.

In a few moments the pealing organ commenced a grand and solemn anthem, and Tiny's clear and bird-like voice could be distinctly heard, harmoniously blending with the deeper notes of the other singers.

Then little Kate whispered to her companion, "Oh Frank! I hear sister Tiny! I hear her singing."

"So do I," answered Frank, "she sings like an angel, don't she, Kitty?"

"No she don't; I don't like that *long* kind of

singing ; it's too slow. I wish she would sing something else."

"Perhaps you had better ask her," answered the thoughtless fellow.

At this moment there was a pause in the music.

"Now or never," thought Kate, and to Frank's unspeakable consternation, that morsel of a woman, jumped up on the seat, and lifting up her voice to its utmost capacity, cried out, "Sister Tiny! **SISTER TINY!** see here! only sing 'Pop goes the weasel,' and I'll be *satisfied*."

If a theatrical descent could have been achieved through a trap door into a church vault at that moment, Frank would gladly have disappeared, dragging his tormenting demon with him.

The sensation created was extraordinary ; for the suppressed laughter sounded as if a fresh wind had gotten into the church by mistake, and was wheezing and whistling and sneezing, in its efforts to escape. One fat old gentleman found the joke so dangerous that he grew perfectly black in the face, and his family had to seize him by the shoulders and march him out in double-quick time. If Kate was not *satisfied* in one way, she certainly was in another, for she was frightened out of her senses.

On the same Sunday, in the evening, as the Stanleys were sitting at tea, the bell rang; and as the door opened, Kate exclaimed, "Oh, sister Tiny! it's 'the gentleman with the nose.'"

This was one of Frank's careless speeches; fortunately only the family heard it, and their guest attributed their laughing faces to their delight in seeing him, as he had lately returned from abroad.

It was quite true that the worthy man rejoiced in a most prodigious Roman nose, with a hump like a camel's back in the very middle of it; but he was a very pleasant, intelligent gentleman—and they were glad to see him.

"You stayed so long in China," said Mr. Stanley, "that I thought you had been created a Mandarin, with an embroidered yellow dress, red buttons, and three tails. I suppose you talk nothing but Chinese."

"As to that," he answered, "I did try to learn the language, especially after I had made a hearty meal upon what *I* thought was 'chin-chin, quack-quack,' but which the Cooley assured me was 'chin-chin, bow-wow,' but I can only speak it in a broken sort of way."

"Just think, Frank," laughed Tiny, "Mr. Moses talks 'broken China.'"

"Yes," he continued, "and it will be reduced to atoms, now that I am out of practice; but I became quite expert at eating pickled sea slugs, bird's-nest soup, and rice with chop sticks; the Chinese eat rice in this way so fast that it looks like a snow-storm going backward."

"Did you see any Chinese ladies, with their tiny feet?" asked Tiny.

"Of course," said Mr. Moses, "danced with dozens of them; they tottered about most delightfully; I did not forget the Chinese feet at home, so I have brought you several pairs of shoes; you need not go to your shoemaker for a year to come," and he took from his pocket and presented to her two pairs of slippers, each about three inches long.

"Nonsense," said Tiny, laughing and blushing, but nevertheless very much delighted, for her feet were very small, and she knew it; while Frank loudly bemoaned the present fashion of long skirts, which hid those tiny feet.

"I do declare," he grumbled, "the women might as well have claws like a griffin, and I dare say the woman who invented long dresses *did* have

claws; or else I am certain that her pedimental supporters ended in a sharp point, like a mark of admiration, the exhibition of which, to say the least, would be decidedly unpleasant. There's Tiny's feet now—put out your feet, Tiny" (she did so demurely), "A model for a sculptor" (Tiny twitched them in)—"Dear me! don't do that, I was just going to make a conundrum on them."

"Never mind, Frank," said little Kate, in a kindly tone, "if she won't let you see her feet, you're to have a present. I heard her say the other day for fear you might go raging mad about her feet, she meant to go to Brady's and have a footograph likeness taken of them."

A roar of laughter followed this revelation, to Tiny's unutterable confusion, which was not at all lessened, when her mother folded her hands meekly over her ample bosom and slowly ejaculated:

"I hope, I *do* hope, my dear, you have not been to Brady's; how very improper! Footograph? I have not heard of that before; you must be mistaken and mean *photograph*, my dear; and you know that photographs are for *faces*, not *feet*."

The laugh increased at this, and Frank, with a comical absence of tact said, "That reminds me of

our friend Mrs. Gosling. She asked me if I had ever heard of Madame Vestris; and upon assuring her that I had, and that my very whiskers curled with admiration at the mention of her name, she kindly informed me that Madame Vestris had very beautiful limbs, 'which I did not know, perhaps,' she said; and 'perhaps not,' I said.

" 'They were so beautiful, Mr. Strange, that all the sculptors took *busts* of them, you know; and 'when an execution was put into her house, you know, the busts of her legs sold for more than all the rest of the furniture, you know.' "

While Frank was relating this ridiculous story, Kate was pertinaciously staring at Mr. Moses. It was very evident that some knotty point was developing in her busy little brain. She had been piously taught by her mother, and she now determined to prove, if possible, the truth of one of her lessons. Slipping softly down from her chair, she walked round to where the guest was sitting; and resting her little hands on his knees, and looking up in his face with an ineffable air (the little monster) of innocence and candor, *lisped out*, "Mr. Moses—~~say~~—Mr. Moses—Are you the Mr. Moses that was found in the bulrushes? Are you? *say!!!*"

An awful silence succeeded this speech for one moment ; then every one thought it best to laugh, and Mr. Moses told "l'enfant terrible" that it was his grandfather who was ventilated in the bulrushes ; but he soon took his leave, bending his head over Tiny's hand, and touching it with his lips ; a foreign fashion, which *Frank* thought highly unnecessary. Tiny blushed and looked at her hand, and behold ! on the back thereof was a faint portrait of a moustache ! Frank saw it, too, and whispered in her ear "Never say dye." That terrible child heard him ; and out she ran to ask Mr. Moses "why he blacked up her sister's hand," and why Frank said "Never say die." Tiny gave her a private shaking, and I may as well mention here, that he never came again.

Oh dear ! she was so provoked ! but what good did it do ? I ask emphatically, did it do *any* good ?

"Mamma," suddenly exclaimed Tiny, a few days after ; "Mamma, I want to ask you a question. You know Frank and I were at Annie Dayton's last evening ; suppose we had in jest repeated the marriage service before her father, would it be a legal marriage ?"

"Certainly," said her mother, looking over her

spectacles at her daughter, "certainly; why do you ask?"

"Oh nothing," laughed Tiny, and she left the room, saying she must go and superintend some preparations that were making for the entertainment of a few friends whom she had invited to spend the evening with her.

"Well now, what a queer question," ejaculated the old lady to herself; "what could have put it into Tiny's head?" Mrs. Stanley had laid violent hold of an idea. She shook her head, and murmured, "I must keep my spectacles on and my ears open, and try to find out whether Tiny means anything."

Just at this moment the cook, with a very red and angry face, came hastily into the room; and said in a loud, provoked voice:

"I wishes to give you warning though, ma'am; as there is ten days of my month left, I hopes its ampial."

"Why, what is the matter?" said her mistress.

"I can't abear to be suspicioned, though, ma'am; and Miss Kate says that I'll be caught if I touch the brandy, as she has made a mark on the bottle. I never took no brandy, though,

ma'am; Miss Kitty says I smells of brandy; I leaves it to any American Judy if I does. There's not a many as'll bile a ham for you as I does; just keep it simpering and simpering, and never biling hard; nor yet be so forkanate in briling as I be; and I don't see (and here she began to wail loudly) why Miss Tiny should say, as Miss Kate tells me, that my third cousin Teddy, was the 'living skeleton,' 'and came here for a dinner,' I don't, though! and I gives you ampial warning ma'am—' and she flounced out of the room sniffing with another reference to an American Judy—meaning, it is supposed, the bulwarks of our national liberties.

"Oh me! Kate, what *am* I to do with you?" said the old lady, in a helpless way.

"Don't worry about me, mamma," said Kate, affectionately; "*I'm* all right; sit down, do; and I will tell you a most beautiful story Frank told me last night, to keep me from 'setting any more people by the ears;' what did he mean by that? I didn't touch any ears at **all**; I only said to Mr. Waddle, 'Mr. Waddle *who* will set the North River on fire? Sister **Tiny** says '*you* never will.' But never mind, mamma, I'll tell you this story;"

and she smoothed down her dress, and taking a long breath, began—

“Once upon a time—but what is that upon the carpet?” said Kate, interrupting herself and running to pick it up. “A note! and the very one sister Tiny got this morning, and kissed so; the idea of kissing a piece of paper! tell me the reading in it, mamma.”

(Ah Tiny! you careless little gipsy! why, oh! why did not your ears burn, or your thumbs prick, when there was so much mischief in the wind.)

The note was open, and Mrs. Stanley glanced at the beginning. What? she rubbed her spectacles, and looked again; “*Dearest little wife,*” and the old lady stood confounded, not to say petrified.

“Dearest little wife”—could it be that her own darling, her Tiny, who despised deceit and concealment, had indeed been so foolish as to have been married the previous evening? much as she knew they both loved a joke, she thought this was carrying a joke a little too far.

But then, there was her strange question that very morning, and there was the tell-tale letter, which Kate was clamoring to hear; and Mrs. Stanley, in her anxiety to learn more, did, I am

obliged to say, rather an unfair thing—she read the note.

It was full of more than the usual quantity of never-ending devotion, never-failing constancy, and never-dying love, and was signed your “Adoring husband, Frank.” Date that morning.

“Alas! deary me!” sighed the old lady; “here is a pretty piece of business; but I will act deliberately,” she continued, folding up the note. “I will say nothing, but will watch Frank and Tiny closely this evening, and then decide what course to pursue.”

It was a soft summer night; hushed, and beautifully clear. The full-orbed moon in regal splendor proudly sailed in the zenith, and the idle zephyrs floating through the square just lifted with their dainty breath the ringlets of the merry girls as they hastened across with their attendant cavaliers, to spend the evening with their favorite friend.

Tiny welcomed them heartily; and Frank said, “I’m so glad you’ve come,” for Tiny objects to the epitaph I have been composing for my tombstone, and I leave it to you, if it is not the most telling thing out.”

"Tombstone!" they all exclaimed, in considerable consternation; "what an idea! you don't think of dying, do you? Impossible! how very ridiculous!"

"Ridiculous? it will be splendid! you are miles out of your reckoning. Just listen! I intend to have on my tombstone these words: 'Here lies an HONEST lawyer,'—'honest' in very large capitals."

"How is any one to know that it is you, Mr. Strange?" said Annie Dayton.

"How will they know?" answered Frank, facing round upon her, "by minding the *emphasis*, to be sure. Every man, woman and child will stop short,—look again, and repeat aloud: 'What? Here lies an HONEST lawyer?' and immediately add, 'that's strange.' *Me*, of course! and *my* name, covered with glory as the *only honest lawyer* extant, will be handed down along with Shakespeare and Mother Goose to the remotest posterity. What's in a name? Everything! Wait until *I* write *my* commentary on Shakespeare; the whole world will be staggered; my first and fiercest onslaught will be upon that unlucky speech of Juliet's

for whom, with that exception, I have the most transcendent admiration."

At this moment a very handsome young man came up to Tiny, and bowing stiffly, said—

"I must wish you good evening, Miss Stanley."

"Why, I'm very sorry to hear you say so, Mr. Bailey," answered Tiny, in some surprise. "What has happened?"

"Oh nothing, nothing at all; you're very delightful, good evening;" "stupid! heavy dragoons!" he muttered, going out, "confound the whole family! especially that cherub. As she has no wings of her own, it's a pity somebody else couldn't fly away with her." (I wonder if he meant the d—l.)

"What *could* have happened," cried Tiny, looking very much annoyed.

"Now don't pretend you're sorry, sister Tiny," said Kitty, "you know what you and Frank said, and I just told it to him, to make him feel comfortable."

Poor Tiny! with crimson cheeks, and lips trembling with anger, she said, "What did you tell him, you—you—"

"Just what you said; I said, 'Mr. Bailey, sister

Tiny said you were very handsome, and so very genteel; but it's a pity you are so stupid; and then Frank said, 'Yea, verily! he belongs to the heavy dragoons.'"

"That child kills me," cried Tiny; and she was rushing in the midst of the repeated bursts of laughter to her mother, to beg that Kate might be immediately put to bed, when Frank begged her not to punish the poor little unconscious mischief maker, saying, "After all, it is our own fault, Tiny, we must learn to abuse our friends in the dead languages before the monkey; she has just promised to go peaceably to bed herself if I will tell her a story."

"Yes Frank, I will; come, a nice story now; very long, and all about people that I know! make haste! begin!"

"Oh certainly," said Frank. Kate planted herself upon his knee, her eyes nearly starting out of her head with her anxiety not to lose a word, and her head so much on one side, that comparisons with a magpie were inevitable. You may be sure that the forthcoming story would be packed away, for the future confusing and confounding of the unlucky narrator.

“What shall I tell you? Did you ever hear of the siege of Troy?”

“Oh! I've *been* there,” said Kate. “It's up the North River; and papa says they ask a most abominable price to go there by the railroad.”

“The very place,” continued Frank. “Well, not long ago there lived across the way a king, called Menelaus; whether because he made our ridiculous quantity of ridiculous laws or not, I can't say. He was rather a nice old cove, and his life and death were just the reverse of that of most children's heroes, for they generally live in peace and die in grease, whereas *he* lived in Greece and died in peace. Being a man of arms, he took to his arms a young woman called Helen, who had more beauty than brains, and who treated him to a curtain lecture every night, and scratched his face because she wanted to go to Paris.

“I know!” interrupted Kitty eagerly; “Paris is the *catipal* of France.”

“Not exactly,” answered Frank. “This was Paris of Troy, a tremendous dandy. He was the son of a fine old fellow named Priam, who was governor of Troy, and whose very airy attire consisted of a long white nightgown, and no boots. He, in

his turn, was ruled by his wife, and left a long and brilliant line of posterity, terminating in that genial, excellent and talented man, the Rev. Dr. Irenius Priam, the editor of the 'New York Deserver!' while the old king himself had a geneological tree taller than Adam's, if you can believe (as of course you must) that learned antiquarian and poet Campbell, who wrote 'The last Man,' and who knew perfectly well what he was about, when he said or sung :

" ' I saw the last of human mould
That shall creation's death behold,
As Adam saw his Priam.'

" Well, as Helen could not go to Paris, Paris came to call upon her, and invited her to take a trip to Troy ; and was so very uncivil as not to include old Poppy Menelaus in the invitation. He told her it was only a step ; so she took it, and a very false step it proved ; for though he called immediately for his *galley* and rowed away, another precious row came of it. For Menelaus instantly made up a select party to go to Troy too, and invited all the kings of his acquaintance to accompany him. One of these kings was from the Yankee land of ancient times, and was called Ulysses, an amazing

cute chap, up to all sorts of dodges, wooden nutmegs, shoepeg melon seeds, and painted pine knives. Another was a Turk and an Aga, Aga Memnon was his name. Another was such a dreadful fellow for fighting, that his admirers though they could not flatter him more than to cry out 'Oh kill us!' whereupon he obtained the name of Achilles. His nephew lives in this very city, and is one of the firm of 'Victor and Achilles,' importers of stockings in Duane street; and will sell you as many stockings as you want. The more you buy the better he'll be pleased; for you see, he went into that business of covering for the feet, because his poor dear uncle lost his life on account of one end of his foot being uncovered as you shall presently hear.

"Well, off all these fellows went to Troy; and having arrived, the Trojans were so rude as to slam the door in their faces; so they sat down before the walls, and began to scold the inhabitants and storm the city. But though the Trojans would not let them in, they were fools enough every few days to let themselves out and engage in various bloody single combats, with double-edged swords, and presented Menelaus and the rest with a great many

pointed arguments, in the shape of spears and arrows, to induce them to go away. They kept up this fun for ten years ; but still their enemies stuck closer than a brother, and poor old Menelaus kept bachelor's hall, and had to cook his own pork and beans, and pumpkin pie.

“ At last one day Achilles had a little set-to with a hectoring fellow named Hector, another son of our old friend Priam ; which resulted in mischief to Hector, for Achilles made him see ten thousand stars the first moment, and nothing at all the second ; after which the poor fellow, screaming out, ‘ Och hone ! I’m kilt intirely,’ bit the dust ; and then Achilles took him on a little tour round the city ; and as there was only one seat in his chariot, he thought the best way to accommodate Hector, was to let him ride behind ; and for fear he might lose his company, he just tied him by the heels, and started, while his papa Priam stood on the walls, and laid the dust with his tears, and damaged that old white nightgown in the most appalling manner.”

“ No ! did he ? ” cried Kitty ; “ who mended it for him ? did he tear those dreadful five-cornered holes, which I tear in my frocks, and which old Aunt Betsey gets so cross over ? say ! ”

“Yes, and *his* old aunt Betsey said it was a perfect object to behold, and only fit for the rag-bag, or a paper manufactory.

“And now let me tell you what happened to Achilles. His mother was a particular friend of Pluto; who was the major of the unmentionable-to-ears-polite place; and he allowed her to dip Achilles in the Styx.”

“Dry sticks?” asked Kitty.

“No, wet. It had the power of making its bathers invulnerable; but not being a Yankee, she was not smart enough to think of pitching him in, and diving after him, but held him by the heel; and gave him such a deliberate dip, that his heel was not touched by the water; and *there* was just where Paris had him; and *there* he shot him, just as he was executing a war-dance to celebrate the death of Hector, and was standing on the tip of one toe, and pointing and shaking the other at Paris, after the fashion which the boys call ‘taking a sight.’ Paris shot him in the heel, and he’ll never dance again; and if you are sorry for him, you will buy all your stockings of his nephew in Duane street, opposite the hospital.

“This was a horrible blow to the Greeks as well

as Achilles ; and they concluded to pack up and be off, with a 'Bob-swore,' as the Englishman said for 'Good night,' and thought it was French ; but that regular Yankee, Ulysses, sang them a song of Christy's Minstrels, the moral of which was that 'it would neber do to gib it up so.' He then set them all to work at a wooden horse, which he said the Trojans would be asses enough to believe in, such a world of gammon and spinage as it was ! and having stuffed his horse with warriors instead of wool, he sent it as a pretty little present to the Trojans ; and then the rest said 'Bob-swore,' and got into their galleys. But they only rowed a little way and hid behind the corner.

"And now, spite of the entreaties of a cunning old coon, named Laöcoon, and the prophecies of a lady called Cassandra—"

"Now stop, and tell me," cried Kate, "was she any relation to General Cass? Was she?"

"His great grandmother, *she* was, and was generally thought to be cracked in the upper story. Well, in spite of their entreaties, the Trojans took in the horse and—the Greeks took in the Trojans. For when night came stealing on, the Greeks marched out of the horse ; and running to the gates,

unlocked them, and all their friends and comrades came tumbling in, armed at all points, with grizzly war depicted in every feature, each with a quid of tobacco in his left cheek, and jack-boots under his arms.

“And now, all was catastrophe and confusion, hurrying and scurrying, slashing and screaming, and firing and fighting; and then some impertinent little son of a Dutchman pulled Priam out of bed in that same tattered old white nightgown; and to make a long story short the Greeks carried the day—or the night—and Troy was no more: or as Virgil said, ‘*Ilium fuit*,’ which means “Troy was,” which you know is a fib, for *you* say it is high and dry up the North River at this very moment.”

“Now thank you, Frank,” said Kate, “for that real true story; papa knows Mr. Achilles, and mamma knows Mr. Priam; and I do hope they will come here soon, so I can ask them to tell me more about their relations.”

“You’ll suffer for this story,” said Tiny, laughing, and she ran off to propose dancing to her young friends. Her eyes were wildly bright this evening; and she felt in what are called “tearing spirits,” and her lively sallies, comical speeches, and

musical laughter had such a catching effect on the little party, that every one was in the most delightful humor with themselves and each other.

I don't know, but I suspect that a prettily fancied ring, that sparkled for the first time on one of Tiny's little fingers, had something to do with her charming spirits; certain it is, that the occasional batteries of glances between Frank and herself were all noticed by her mother, and gave her unspeakable uneasiness.

"Ah! I'm afraid it must be so," she sighed.

"They are all trying to persuade your father to dance," said Annie Dayton to Tiny.

"Are they?" she cried; "what fun! I'll go and add my entreaties; he'll dance for *me*," and running up to Mr. Stanley, she begged him to delight them all; "Now do dance papa, just for fun, you know."

"And for Tiny's sake," chimed in Frank.

"Now what a crazy little chatterbox it is," cried Mr. Stanley "to ask your old father to dance 'for fun,' at this time of life;" and he gave her a passage from Shakespeare, which plainly demonstrated that dancing was out of the question for an old gentleman with a queue.

“Not at all! you have not read *my* copy of Shakespeare; this is what he says”—and with a high tragedy “stride and a stop,” she saluted him with—

“Rise! Father rise! Titania demands your help.
Rise! That's a clever dear old gentleman,
And share our fun.’”

The parody carried the day; and laughing heartily, Mr. Stanley suffered himself to be led in triumph to the head of the set then forming; while his delighted daughter, taking off her rings which knocked against the keys of the piano, began to play; and her father flourished and figured away, in the very best style of the old school; good naturedly joining in the merriment, and recommending his partner to keep out of the circumference of his pigeon wings and *entrechats*.

While Tiny was playing, little Kate picked up one of the rings, lying on the piano, and going to her mother, said—

“Mamma look! look! why don't you look? here is sister Tiny's pretty new ring tell me the reading in it, do? won't you? say, won't you?”

Mrs. Stanley took the ring; and looking sharply through her spectacles, discovered to her astonish-

ment the words "*My little Wife,*" very prettily engraved on the inside. Alas! and alack! here was "confirmation strong as holy writ;" and the good lady's countenance assumed such a blank, helpless expression, that Kitty asked her "what made her look so silly."

Well!" gasped Mrs. Stanley at last, "This is conclusive! It is dreadful! I must do something, and *I will!*" and frightened nearly out of her wits, and quite out of her common sense, she hastily left the room; and writing a note to the Rev. Mr. Dayton, who lived only a few doors from them, required his immediate attendance. She despatched it by a servant; and then returned to the parlor in a state of terrible trepidation, to await his coming.

Finding, when she entered the room, that the quadrilles were over, the young people engaged dancing a polka, and her husband at liberty, she drew him aside; took off her spectacles, and put them on again four several times; then she took out her pocket handkerchief and sat down upon a gentleman's hat, and converted it into an opera hat; then in a voice of the deepest emotion, she said—

"My dear, I am in the greatest distress. If we had been two hard-hearted rhinoceroses!—"

“Rhinoceros! what do you mean, my dear?”

“Well, I’m going to tell you,” said the poor old lady.

“Then stand not upon the order of your going, but go at once.”

“Yes, my dear, I’m going. Frank and Tiny were privately married at Mr. Dayton’s last evening.”

“No!” said Mr. Stanley.

“Yes,” said Mrs. Stanley.

“No! I say;” said Mr. Stanley.

“I say yes;” said Mrs. Stanley.

“No! No! by Jupiter I swear no;” said Mr. Stanley.

“I won’t swear, but they did;” persisted Mrs. Stanley; “and rather than Tiny’s reputation should suffer from the strange reports that may get about, I have just sent for Mr. Dayton, and as soon as he comes I shall request him to marry them over again; I shall never be happy nor satisfied until I have myself witnessed that they are made husband and wife.”

For the first time in his life on record, Mr. Stanley’s astonishment exceeded his coolness.

“Bless me!” he cried, “Upon my honor! By

George! who would have believed in the proximity of such a remarkable crisis. But are you quite certain of your facts?"

"Unfortunately, I have too many proofs;" answered his wife; and she related to him the discoveries of the day, adding—"Poor little Kate, with all her mischief, has done good service in this unhappy state of affairs; for *she* brought the note to me, *she* showed me the ring."

"Ah the ring! yes! the ring is indeed very conclusive. 'Here, take my ring, my house, mine honor, yea, my life be thine.' I *did* think my little sunbeam had more sense;" sighed the old gentleman; but he comforted himself with the reflection that clandestine marriages must have happened among the ancients; and certainly did in Shakespeare's time; and having just quoted, "All's well that ends well," he ended with a whole page of "Romeo and Juliet."

"May I have the particularly particular honor of waltzing with you?" said Frank, addressing his lady love, who had vacated her seat at the piano to one of her friends.

"With the most ^éreluctant reluctance," she replied, giving him a sunny smile; and putting on

her rings, she discovered that her "last best gift," the opal with the little diamonds sparkling round it, was missing; looking down she saw it hanging loosely from one of Kitty's chubby fingers.

"Oh you little scaramouch;" she cried "how could you meddle with your sister's rings? Give it to me. Did you show it to any one?"

"Oh no, nobody; only just mamma;" said the child.

"You quintessence of mischief!" cried her sister; "you ought to be kept in a glass case, hermetically sealed! What a little get-me-in-a-scraps it is!" and very much provoked, Tiny drew on her gloves, wondering if her mother had seen the inside of the ring, and if she had, what she thought of it.

At this moment Mr. Dayton, the minister, entered the room. He looked round, not a little surprised to see so many there, and entirely thrown out of his conjecture that sudden sickness in the family had occasioned his being called; and Frank and Tiny were far more surprised when Mrs. Stanley called them to come to her, in a tone that attracted the attention of all in the room.

"Tiny," began her mother, in a hurt and trembling voice. "I must say that I am grieved beyond

expression, and also deeply offended with your very foolish conduct of last evening. I *did* think that I had instilled such a strong sense of propriety in your mind, as to have prevented your acceding to any persuasions of Frank's which you knew would not meet with your parents' approbation. Don't attempt any excuse," she continued, seeing that both, with bewildered looks at each other and her, were trying to speak. "I won't hear a word! not a single word!" and turning to the worthy pastor, requested him to marry them *again*, with a reproachful accent upon the last word, which was utterly lost on the worthy and unconscious minister.

I wish I could paint with my pen the faces of the company during this harangue.

But adequate description is impossible. I can only say that there was a room full of very open countenances, as, with distended eyes and lips wide apart, they witnessed these strange proceedings; while in utter bewilderment, almost dismay, the young couple stood up, and the ceremony commenced. * * * * * (The reader is requested to stare at these asterisks till he supposes it concluded.)

When they were fairly united and the benedic-

tion pronounced, Mrs. Stanley uttered a long-drawn sigh; and looking greatly relieved, though still tremulous and twitchy, she addressed the young husband thus—

“As I have most fortunately been enabled to make things right, you may inform me now, Frank, what possessed you and Tiny to induce Mr. Dayton to marry you last evening?”

“Ma’am!!!!” stammered Frank.

“Madam!!!!” exclaimed the minister.

“Why—were—you—married—last—evening?” repeated Mrs. Stanley, stiffening up, grimly frowning, and looking majestically over her spectacles.

“Ma’am!” repeated Frank again, “I—you—I—why, my dear madam, you must be dreaming! I am utterly at a loss to comprehend why you have married us *this* evening! and I do most solemnly assure you that this is the very first time I have ever repeated the words of the service with this my dear little wife.”

“Why Tiny! why TITANIA!” said her mother, looking somewhat less majestic, but still very much bolstered up. “*Do you remember the question you asked me this morning?*” (the emphasis on every word was as pointed as needles.)

It was now Tiny's turn to stammer; but there was an undoubted expression of truth on her sweet face, as she said, "Oh mamma! how could you! Frank and I called at Annie Dayton's last evening; and Frank, to plague me (he's always plaguing me, good-for-nothing Blue Beard!) proposed that we should repeat the marriage service before Mr. Dayton's portrait, that hung in the room; that it would be capital fun, and make us perfect in our parts; and that everybody had a rehearsal before the real ceremony came off, and ever so much more. But," earnestly added the trembling and blushing girl, with her eyes which were now brimming with tears fixed on her mother's face, "*I did not do it, indeed, mamma, for I was afraid it was not right; and Annie said that she would be a witness, which would constitute a Scotch marriage, and that she believed would make it legal. So I was thinking it all over this morning, and I asked you the question to satisfy myself entirely.*"

"But—but, my dear, Kate brought me a letter this morning," said Mrs. Stanley with a grievous expression, but collecting all her forces with adamantine sternness.

"Oh dear mother! stop! do stop!" interrupted

Tiny. Her cheeks out-damasked the rose; and her beautiful eyes fell under their long lashes, as she explained that Frank had sent her that letter that very morning, he said "on approbation," as the dry good clerks call it, as a slight specimen of the style of epistle he intended to write to her after they were married.

The old lady's foundations were tottering, and her breath became short. "The ring! the ring! the opal ring!" she gasped, driven to her last and convincing proof.

Another and another tide of crimson overspread Tiny's face and neck; and Frank came to the rescue by saying that he had bought the ring, and had "my little wife" engraved in it, to keep himself as something to look at, and prevent him from becoming impatient until the happy time arrived, when his little Tiny might wear it. He had only brought it that evening to see if it fitted; and the little soft hand looked so fascinating, ornamented with the delicate jewel, that he had entreated her to wear it for the evening, and give it back to him when he left.

And the mysteries were all explained! and unlike the "baseless fabric of a vision, *had* left a

wretch (as Frank quoted it) behind;" and that wretch was Kitty, who was sniffing behind the door, rubbing her nose up, as children invariably do, with four inches square of hem-stitched pocket handkerchief; also there was displayed to view an old and most respectable lady, who had been particularly engaged in judging and acting from *appearances*. Her countenance at the final *denouement*, presented such a droll distress, such a comical medley of expression that it was utterly irresistible in its actual effect; for the company, after pausing one well-bred instant, in a vain endeavor to maintain their gravity, burst into a simultaneous explosion, or as Frank said, "went off into fits" of uncontrollable laughter, minister and all; and for five minutes the apartment resounded with merriment, until it would seem that the very walls were cracking, and the roof in danger.

"Well," said Mr. Stanley, after the mirth had subsided a little, and the company were beginning to reflect that they ought not to have laughed. "Well, it is my deliberate opinion that we have been marrying my little Tiny on a speculation, instead of a certainty, and no fault of hers either" (with a sly glance at his wife). "But where's Kitty? come

out, Kitty, never mind;" dragging that terrible child from her ambush behind the door, with her finger in her mouth; her face swollen with crying, and her poor little nose turned up a surprising height in the air, by the unceasing rubbing mentioned above. It was plain that she was in infinite terror; and supposed that all the company had pronounced sentence upon her as a murderer or something worse; and she was there and then to be taken out and instantly executed; but her father kissed her, and said, "Never mind, Kitty; don't cry any more. 'All's well that ends well;' we will give the young couple a hearty blessing; and I will look at my bonds and mortgages, and see what I can do for them."

* * * * *

Six months passed away. It was a stormy night in December. The wind rushed past with a wild moaning sound; and the sharp, frozen rain pattered against the windows of a small but pretty house in Lexington avenue. But the fire blazed cheerily in the little front parlor and with the softened light shining through the thick white shade over the gas-burner, gave a refined, delicious air of comfort to the room, which was greatly heightened by the contrast to the audible dreariness without.

A young gentleman, tall and slender enough for "the mainmast of a revenue cutter," was sitting by a pretty centre table, intently occupied in studying and making notes, from a ponderous volume which lay open before him.

Nearer the fire sat a lady; her little figure nearly buried in an immense arm chair, large enough for two, busily plying her needle, and ever and anon casting a loving glance at the student.

Dear reader, do you know them? After all, perhaps, Mrs. Stanley's mistake had been the very best thing in the world she could have done for Frank; for, stimulated by the necessity for greater exertion, talents, of whose existence he had been scarcely aware, were brought into active play; and the result was that his little wife and himself had commenced housekeeping in a very pretty style, and were just as happy as two contented laughter-loving and each-other-loving bodies could possibly be. Not an inch of tape did they care now for Kate's speeches; though they were as ever of the most tremendous description—and as to Tiny's pies!—they fairly melted in your mouth.

Frank continued reading on the above-mentioned evening for ten minutes longer; when, rais-



·Will you tell me *now* that you love me, Tiny, my little wife?"—p. 98.

ing himself to turn over a leaf, his attention was attracted by the glittering whisk of something to-and-fro in the air—and his eye rested on an opal ring set with small diamonds sparkling on one of his wife's pretty fingers. It must at that moment have been a talisman or magnet; for the book was shut with a bang! and rising from the table, he approached Tiny, "*gently insinuated himself on part of her chair, and passed his arm round her waist.*"

"Will you tell me *now* that you love me, Tiny, my little wife?"

His little wife looked up in his face, and her intelligent eyes, "*beautiful as a heifer's*" (*vide* Homer), were filled with an expression of confiding fondness, as she answered.

"Yes, indeed I will, dear Frank, over and over again. I will tell you now how much I love you, how I have always loved you, almost from the first time we met, and how often I longed to tell you so before we were married, but was prevented by fear of doing wrong, and by maidenly reserve."

Frank thanked her for the words and the look—*how*, I shall not tell; and as Kitty was not there, she won't either; but I will communicate this

much. He declared, "that to the very end of his days, and a great while longer," he should never cease to think his mother-in-law the wisest of women; or to congratulate himself that he wrote Tiny a "specimen letter;" and displayed such brilliant talent in the matter of the opal ring; and above all maintain, that no heavenlier cherub dwelt on this earth, than his little sister, otherwise injuriously called *L'Enfant Terrible*.

CHAPTER V.

THE story was finished ; and if hearty laughter, like chimes of bells, with close attention, and all their eyes set round Harry's face, like the brilliants round the opal of the fateful ring in the story, were exponents of success, it was eminently so. Let us see what was said.

"Oh!" cried Mrs. Wilton, "how I wanted to shake that awful little Kitty! the—the—imp!! I don't know what to call her!"

The little wife gave me a gleeful glance; and said demurely, "What would *you* call her, Auntie?"

"A remarkably sensible and interesting child," I answered in a solemn tone, "and one, who I am quite sure, will grow up—if she has not already done so—into a remarkable woman."

"A little wretch!" quoth Mrs. Wilton, "a great deal worse than my brother John."

We all clamored to hear about "brother John."

"Oh certainly! A few weeks ago I called upon a very dear friend; and carelessly left my card case on the centre table—forgot it. Yesterday I was lunching with mamma, and observed that I was going to Mrs. Wood's to get my card case, which she had had six weeks.

"Don't trouble yourself," said brother Sam, a great awkward schoolboy; "she means to hook it!" Well, I went and took little Johnny with me in his handsome black velvet suit. I felt quite proud of him. I found the card case just where I had left it; and when Mrs. Wood entered, I ran to meet her so affectionately! when that monster Johnny yelled out, 'Why sister! there is the very woman who hooked your card case!!' She stopped short! she stiffened into stone, except her eyes, which blazed with anger! and oh dear! how faint I felt! It was no use to apologize; that small man had lost me my friend, and made me an enemy. So women, after all, don't do all the mischief! There!"

Then Mr. Wilton, glancing at his wife, quietly said, "Don't they? Oh! ee! ee!" This last was an involuntary, consequent upon getting his ear pinched.

Upon which "pretty cousin Adelaide" smiled so charmingly that young Appreciate's heart beat quite uncomfortably under his vest ; and with his face all in a glow, he begged me to introduce him.

"How—ow do you do?" he stammered, in the most awkward manner possible ; converted into a frightened booby by the witchcraft of a smile, and the glance of a pair of violet eyes. It would have been unparalleled barbarity to have kept him in this mortifying condition ; so cousin Adelaide, with generous resolution and delicate tact, soon put him comparatively at his ease ; and the chocolate coming in opportunely, the evening's entertainment proved most comprehensively satisfactory. Even Mr. Gracie Growler, although he ate the sandwiches with an air of cynical indifference, *took a great many*, and remarked in a mechanical tone that the story was not morally injurious, or the sandwiches physically disagreeable, which was an amount of praise that made the little wife's face quite radiant, and caused pretty cousin Adelaide to give utterance to such a sweet little singing burst of laughter that young Appreciate got up and shook hands with his uncle Growler, without any apparent rhyme or reason ; and furthermore in a sudden glow

of affection, offered to give the next reading, which should be a story or essay, in support of his uncle's indignant tirade on the subject of tight lacing. He modestly urged, as he was studying medicine and should soon graduate, he ought to be able to write professionally about it.

"Yes, sir!" cried Mr. Growler in a rasping voice, to conceal the pleasure he felt. "You couldn't do a better thing. You just write my foolish sister, and your foolish aunt into a fit of penitence and amendment, and you'll find my last will and testament the most entertaining document you ever read. Yes, sir! induce her to give those poor yellow-faced girls the free use of their lungs, and throw anti-bilious pills out of the window—and your preaching will do more for you than your practice by a long shot!"

His preaching and practice! It was pretty cousin Adelaide's smile that would do it all.

So the little wife bade her good night, with a tender kiss and a meaning smile, for the incipient doctor had eagerly entreated the honor of escorting her home. You would have thought she was a Sèvres porcelain angel, as to her material presence; so elaborately gentle was his care, and so vengeful

the beams that flashed from his eyes, did any one in passing come too near. As she turned her moonlit face upon him, and with smiling thanks, bade him "good night and sweet dreams," at the door of her pleasant home; that last smile—those glorious deep eyes—the velvety touch of the little white fingers—Oh it was all over with him; and as she disappeared within the door, I noticed that the foolish fellow walked slowly away, trembling, or as his uncle would probably express it, "in a hifalutin state of happiness—all but cracked, sir!"

The rest of us arrived soberly home; after appointing the evening for our next meeting; said our prayers; yes, of this I am certain; and slept the sleep of the just.

CHAPTER VI.

✦ HARRY had been very busy ever since his successful *débat* in translating and adapting a capital French story, and the healthy interest he took in his work reacted upon his wife with better effect than gallons of tonics. The ills of life looked marvellously smaller to both ; she went singing about the house in the mornings like a lark ; she had uncontrollable little fits of laughter, about nobody knows what ; she unweariedly taught little Carrie to say such a succession of new and more astonishing things to her father, when he came home to dinner, that he never once looked at the decanter. Thank Heaven ! the dread disease had not yet taken root ; the good seed was springing up with steadfast growth, and the little wife fenced round her stragem, with ministering bands of love ; and like a skilful general, placed a sentinel at the entrance,

more powerful than locks, bolts, or an army of giants,—his own little child.

We assembled the second evening in high spirits. We were all curiosity and premature criticism. How was young Appreciate to handle so delicate a subject? Mrs. Wilton audibly wondered at his temerity in daring to attack so fashionable a foible.

“Foible, ma'am!” thundered Mr. Growler, who did not glide into a subject like a serpent, but pitched down upon it like a bombshell. “Foible! you mean vice! vice *in a vice!* a double crime!”

“Dear me,” remonstrated the provoking woman, “if our waists were the same size as the Venus de Medici's, what dowdy cotton bags we should look like! And then fancy us with the wrists and ankles of the Greek slave! Enormous! clumsy! awful! Now look at that!” she cried; thrusting out a white tiny hand, ending in a small round wrist. “I would give ever so much to have this half its size.”

“It is all out of proportion as it is,” growled Mr. Growler. “Perfect little goose!” he muttered.

“Old fossil!” she whispered to me, with a bewitching little curl in her lip, and clenching her

hand into a small snowball, "I want to pound him!" Then turning to him with a hypocritical smile, all humility and teachableness, she purred out, "Oh! of course, dear Mr. Growler, you know all about these things scientifically. I should like *so* much to learn how we ought to be proportioned by mathematical tables—the exact number of average inches, you know, which go to make a beautiful woman. Won't you please measure one off for me, sir? all in squares."

The little wife looked quite terrified at this passage of arms; but there was no need; for the enemy, deceived by the artful wiles of his antagonist, came to quarters as well as squares, and immediately grunted his approbation of her laudable desire to remain no longer in such shocking ignorance of the proper proportions of the human form divine. "Why," he shouted, "your hands and feet are absolute deformities! they should be,—your hand, as long as your face, and three times the length of your nose. Your foot should measure four noses, or one sixth the length of your body. Now! look at me; I am six feet, or seventy-two inches high; my nose is three inches long; my hand nine; and my foot twelve inches; all in exact proportion;" and he

flourished a hand, and put forth to her horrified view a prodigious member, clad, as she afterward declared, in the identical shoe which sheltered Mother Goose's old woman, and her numberless children. "I will send you a folio treatise on anatomy to-morrow morning; you will peruse it with delight; and wonder as much as I do at your present ignorance."

"Oh thank you! I shall be so happy to read it. O—h!!" The last word was in consequence of getting a malicious little unbelieving pinch on the arm from her husband; and in the general laughter at her discomfiture, Mr. Growler forgot to ask what it meant.

As before, I suggested the reading should now begin; and young Appreciate, smoothing out his manuscript, commenced, after blushing a great deal, and looking deprecatingly at cousin Adelaide, a story entitled:

CORSETS:

AN ABSURD ALLEGORY, WITH NEVERTHELESS A GRAVE AND SAD MEANING.

ONE evening, at the New York Academy of Music I saw in two separate boxes two young girls, both charming, both blondes, but differing as much

as if one had been a glowing painting, the other a marble statue.

The first and youngest had hair of a rich chestnut brown, shaded in parts with a darker hue, falling on either side in careless curls. Her gray eye, full of fire and resolution, like those of a petted and spoiled child who fears no one, and never dreams of misery or suffering, glanced in a proud, queenly way around the opera house, while her mouth, rosy with pure and healthful blood, curled at the corners with an irresistible expression of playful pouting.

The other was pale and delicate—beyond the loveliness that belongs to the hues of health. Her cheeks (for their whiteness was too beautiful to seem like a blight) looked like rose leaves in milk; her eyebrows were scarce distinguishable on her blue-veined forehead; her hair, which only waved a little, had an inexpressible, translucent, golden tone, like that of an Undine or an elf.

The first girl seemed to sit in an atmosphere of glorious sunlight; while around the second a mysterious haze, like pale white moonbeams, appeared to envelop her with a faint and sad radiance.

Her eyes, of a blue as deep and tender as the

violet peeping from the snow, swam in their crystal white ; while her long, curled eyelashes, constantly rising and falling with a pretty fluttering motion, gave a still softer and more dreamy tone to their melancholy and velvety expression.

Her person was slender almost beyond belief—certainly beyond healthful nature, for a pair of hands of ordinary size could easily have spanned her waist.

While gazing on these charming children—for the dews of childhood still sparkled freshly on their blossoming years—I asked myself :

“ What will become of them ? ”

“ Whom will they love ? ”

“ Whom will they marry ? ”

“ Consumption, that killing frost of so many of these flowers of beauty—will it not bring a premature fall ? ”

Alas ! I observed that the pale girl particularly had that indefinable charm which is destined soonest to fade ; she seemed pale with her future death—that gentle shadowy angel whose coming brings no terrors to the pure and holy.

The opera house was crowded, for the principal part was rendered by the witching small fairy,

Adelina Patti, and all eyes were upon her ; but *I* watched my pale beauty, irresistibly impelled by *I* know not what power.

Suddenly, in the midst of a bewildering burst of applause for some greater effort than usual from the piquant and brilliant little prima donna, the pale girl fell back white and senseless.

She had fainted. *I* could see that her companions were plainly her parents, as her father clasped her in his arms and carried her to an open window outside. Quickly the mother followed, trembling and heart-stricken. Quickly *I* followed, and eagerly *I* offered assistance ; but oh ! what agony was visible in the countenances of these two, as they looked upon the face of the young girl, white as moonshine, save for the oozing blood that stained her lips. Her silken hair had stolen from its confinement, and, floating down, the crisp night wind caught it up and wrapped it round her like a mantle. There she lay, her weight scarcely felt in the arms of her father, who had centred all his heart and hope on this frail, perishing creature, already half transformed into an angel.

“ Alas ! alas ! ” *I* heard the mother murmur,

“ it is her doom to die. Will she never be stronger ? ” and the hot, agonizing tears fell like rain.

Slowly recovering, the young girl sighed, opened her eyes, and in alarm threw her arms round her mother's neck, and, looking wistfully into her face, implored her to speak to her.

“ Was it my fainting, darling mother ? nay, it was but the heat of the house. I am better—I am well ; ” and with loving, playful sweetness, she kissed the tears from her mother's eyes.

Oh ! the soft, pure young voice ! how its music thrilled me ! and from that moment I was determined to know the past and follow the future of that sweet young life.

I soon learned, no matter how, that Lilian was the only child of her parents ; that, since her birth, their existence was not—they only existed in her. *She* made the perfume of their home ; she was their rest, after the working days were done. Never should she know a thrill of pain or a weary hour. They became children to charm the child, who from her birth never gave them one disrespectful word or look.

Lilian had nothing in common with other children ; there was an ethereal simplicity in man-

ner—a tenderness toward even an unconscious flower; that denoted the union of the intellectual with the childish nature. Her little playmates scarcely dared to sport with her, for they felt her superiority—though, for the first twelve years of her life, her rosy bloom, bounding step, and the undulating graces of her form indicated the highest health.

But the fates are jealous; they cannot endure the sight of happiness; and instead of cutting the painful life-thread of the poor paralytic, or the starving wretch who coughed in a garret; they one day fastened their hungry cruel eyes upon this gentle, obedient girl; and instigated by their baleful whisperings in the shape of a French modiste, her mother drew tight around her soft expanding form

A PAIR OF CORSETS.

Why should I have wished just for one moment, to veil the fact and the name of this torture, under some polite, genteel French jargon? No! let it stand out in fair print—

Lilian was mercilessly tortured by CORSETS.

Two years passed; and no one dreamed of the real reason why the sweet cheek was paling, and the elastic step grew heavy. They relaxed her

school studies; they loosened them altogether; they travelled with her. But the CORSETS were tightened.

The doctors ordered perfect rest from study, concentrated and nourishing food, change of air and scene and constant amusement in the regular old foggy style, without troubling their dignified heads about an article of dress. Bless your heart! don't they let the hapless little children of fashionable parents go about in the depth of winter with bare legs and arms, without protest? Has one ever been known to berate this monstrous pestilent custom of foolish mothers dressing their children in any nonsense "*Le Petit Courrier de Dames*" chooses to invent, regardless of health or fitness? Do *they* know anything about corsets? Of course not! It is no concern of theirs. They leave all those things to the women. Quite inconsistent with masculine dignity.—Bah!

And so Lilian was fading away. Fainting fits had now become frequent; and the terrified parents were beginning to despair as they watched their beloved one. It was about this time that I first met them.

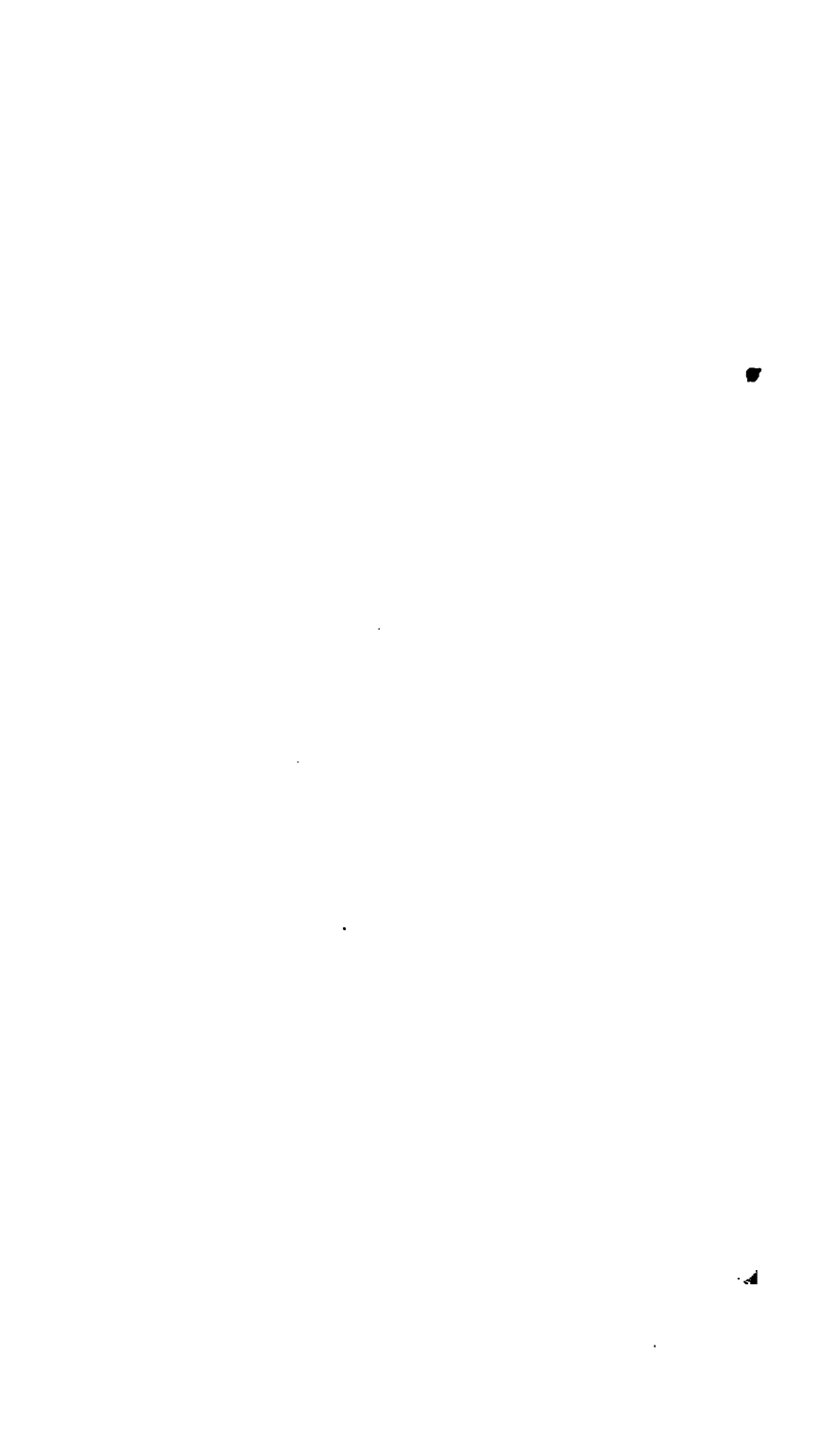
Two more years passed. Lilian's beauty became

disquieting, superhuman, almost fatal. Her fair skin assumed an incredible clearness; her almost transparent hands were whiter than virgin wax; and but for the faint rosy pink of the nails, and the painfully blue course of the veins, one would have thought the life of this world no longer circulated in them.

And now her mother watched over the faintest alteration in the countenance of the only one who, save her husband, made up the sum of her life. She dismissed the attendant, and with jealous love waited upon her darling herself.

But what is this? One morning in dressing Lilian, her mother thought she perceived an unusual projection in the shoulderblades of the young girl. She looked more attentively; she placed her hand beneath; certainly there was a sensible protuberance; while the chest, for years—precious growing years—compressed by the horrible corset, was flat, almost hollow.

Why should I delay to tell it? I feel as if I were confessing a murder. Lilian became humpbacked. They put her in an Orthopedic Institution, in order to have the benefit of proper management and the utmost experience and vigilance of physicians.





"Too late."—p. 111.

Alas! The utmost experience and vigilance in the shape of the same old fogies, now put the hapless Lilian into an IRON CORSET! They stretched her on a bed of torture, with great weights here, and great weights there, fastened together, and to her shoulders, so that like buckets in a well, when one ascended the other descended; thus keeping a continual tug and strain attended with frightful torture upon the patient, unmurmuring victim. The experienced and vigilant old fogies, with self-glorying perseverance, abated not one jot, or tittle, of the "treatment," refusing to see that the fatal words "*too late*" were written on the wasted brow of the heroic but dying girl.

But at last, a strange and wonderful phenomenon was made apparent to even the conservative perceptions of these good old souls. One blessed summer morning, with spectacles on their long noses, and peering closer than usual into "the case," they whispered one to another, what caused an immense pricking up of their long ears. "Why! Pilbocks! Why! Callowmelle! this is no ordinary hump! it is a most unaccountable prolongation of the shoulder blades!"

They looked in their books and found nothing;

they examined their brains—found those in a hopeless muddle ; and in their despair, seeing that their remedies were worse than useless, concluded to act like Christians, and so released the suffering girl from her cuirass, chains, and weights.

Then—a more wonderful thing happened ! Small feathers, whiter than snow, began to appear upon the back. Feathers ! Yes ! yes, good people ! What you and I, and the doctors, had taken for humps, were in reality *wings* ! wings, soon to flutter, and spread, and bear Lilian away to joy, rest, peace, HEAVEN !

As the stream tends to the ocean, so Lilian hastened fast and faster to her end. Her dread disease, now made ravages, which months before had not shown. The hectic cough grew more hurried and choking ; the small red spot on her cheek never went away ; the white unsullied wings were growing rapidly.

The parents, still young, paled and faded, and became gray-haired, with their impending misery ; while friends who loved them turned aside and wept ; and prayed that God would comfort them ; but none offered earthly comfort.

And Lilian, the beautiful ruin, besought her

parents not to grieve. In broken whispers, between the intervals of the cruel coughing, she said it was but a short separation ; but seeing their agony, she felt how vain was her soothing ; and throwing herself on her mother's breast, and taking her father's hand, the woeful tears of the three were mingled together as her sweet life ebbed away.

At last the moment came. In the serene and solemn night time, Lilian gently drew away from her parent's embrace ; and while with white and awe-struck faces they gazed, she softly closed her eyes upon this world ; then, spreading her wings, slowly floated up, up into the still purple sky, and was seen no more.

“After this, put corsets on your girls!” said Mr. Growler, fairly sobbing, and violently mopping his eyes with a direful red silk pocket handkerchief. “I believe every word of it! wings and all! I wish,” he cried, shaking his fist viciously in the air, “I wish I could have the hanging of the woman who invented corsets! It was a woman, of course! no man would have been such a self-sacrificing fool! the very touch of a woman, all whalebone and board, is enough to give one an ague fit! No un-

dulating grace, no pliant elasticity, nothing but preposterous wasp-like deformity fastened to the balloons you call hoops. I don't wonder the Eastern sultana was amazed that the European ladies who visited her were made so differently from herself; nor would she believe, till she had examined with eyes and touch, the complicated machinery of whale-bones and steel springs, that the normal shapes of all women were identical.

"Seek nature's path, and mad French fashions leave," he continued, parodying the poet; "when I can find such a woman without the accompanying strong mindedness, I mean to marry her."

"Take care!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilton; "if it should become generally known that so splendid a prize awaited the renouncing of such vanities as hoops and corsets, a vast legion of spooks, with normal fishing rods of arms, and normal broom-stick figures, in white antique drapery, would be discovered down on their knees at your door the very next morning, screaming in voices like electric shocks for the fulfilment of your promise!"

"Bah!" said Mr. Growler.

Just then a weak fumbling at the door was heard, and Harry arose to open it. A small straight

up-and-down figure in a white garment reaching to the floor, marched gravely in. The sleepy blue eyes first encountered Mr. Growler's grim visage; then wandering round and seeing so much company, poor little Carrie—for it was she—puckered up her rosebud mouth, and staring at Mr. Growler, set up a most piteous squall, and altogether made such an irresistibly comic embodiment of Mrs. Wilton's spooks, that an irrepressible burst of laughter ensued, followed by another still heartier, when the lady bowed to Nature's champion, and said, "The first instalment for you, sir."

But the mother gathered up Carrie in her lap, and cooed and purred over her, as only mothers can; and found that "Carrie woked up" and found she was "all alone," and forthwith scrambled out of her little crib to search through the world for dear mamma and papa, whom she "loved mostest." In accordance with the economy which had been proposed, Carrie's nurse had been discharged; and thus it came to pass that the little one, not without many tremors on the part of her mother, had been left alone.

The chubby dots of feet were held to the fire to be warmed, after their journey through the cold halls; and a great shawl was wrapped over Mr.

Growler's idea of a perfect toilette; and soon the comforted little spook sank to sleep, and was softly carried back to her nest.

Then we all complimented young Appreciate on his "absurdity," modified with criticisms. I, for one, said, I should have liked it much better, if he had made his victim to corsets die in the normal style; and maintained that here Mr. Growler was not consistent; whereupon he assailed me furiously; insisted upon the wings, and vowed she should not die any other way.

"But," remonstrated Mr. Wilton, "it makes it all ridiculous! I declare I was just ready to fall a-weeping, when the feathering up came on! Such a new and unexpected consequence made me hysterical, and I came to grief, roaring with laughter. Fancy a fowl with corsets on!"

We all laughed except cousin Adelaide. I could see that young Appreciate, as he looked at her, thought the heightened color on her cheek, as she just glanced a kind approval of his story, and then bent low her graceful head over some dainty bit of work, was far more beautiful than the blushing roses in her brown hair; and I warrant you, when he escorted her home, he told her so. His uncle

Growler and I were always obligingly a few paces behind.

Then we discussed our chocolate and sandwiches in perfect harmony ; there seemed to be no difference of opinion here. Coming after our intellectual jousts, they acted like emollients, and sent us home in perfect charity with each other, with the exception of cousin Adelaide and young Appreciate. It was dawning upon the little wife and me that they were fast getting in perfect *love* with each other.

How pleasant these meetings were ! and what a comfort it was to me especially, to know, that as the door closed upon the last of us, the little wife could lie down with a quiet heart to her rest. In the daytime Harry was busy winding up his mercantile affairs, which probably would be settled with woeful loss indeed ; but showed a small balance to begin the world with again. Every evening (for I was almost always there) the little cheerful wife and I would work and talk softly together, while he wrote, and talked at intervals to us. Blue sky overhead, little woman ! Your Father in Heaven listens to your prayers, and His Holy Spirit rests like a dove in the house.

CHAPTER VII.

THIS evening, when all were still, I began by saying, "The story I have written and propose to read, is true in every particular. You will be surprised, perhaps I should say annoyed, at the minuteness of description of the first part ; but if you listen attentively, you will find, that in order to understand the strange unfolding of the middle of the story, this was absolutely necessary. My weak pen has failed to give you an adequate description of what I felt and suffered. I do not understand anything about it. I only make a statement of facts precisely as they occurred. Here it is," and I proceeded to read, in a voice rendered tremulous by the quickened memory of that sad time of my life, as follows :

A YARD OF BLACK SILK ELASTIC.

ABOUT two o'clock one afternoon in the month of December last, a sudden whim seized me to go

into the splendid establishment of the Messrs. Appleton, for the purpose of having my photograph taken. I was standing at the time on the opposite side of the street, gazing at their handsome white marble building, and wishing the eminently polite policeman would come and convoy me across through the dense crowd of vehicles, increased at this moment by a long funeral procession.

The noble New York women were then holding their great Union Bazaar in the City Assembly Rooms, which, for the benefit of my out-of-town readers, I will mention are exactly opposite Appletons'. I had just been in these rooms, brilliant with beautiful things and more beautiful women, and had left my daily mite in that labor of love and charity, in the shape of a package of letters for the fair post office. As I crossed Broadway with the help of my affable friend of the police, who told me it was a fine day, I could not help chuckling to myself at the probable bewilderment one of the letters would cause. It purported to come from a lawyer, cool, very polite, but inflexible, who was instructed to commence a suit for breach of promise of marriage; exacting tremendous damages, and accepting of no compromise whatever. It was a

special letter, and addressed to a boy of nineteen years, of surpassing beauty and rare intellectual promise, whose mother was one of my intimate friends. He was her only child, and she a widow—a rich widow—all the worse for him. Together my friend and I had concocted this precious document, not without hope of benefit; for the impetuous boy had offered himself to a pretty little school-girl, whom he had met at a watering place the summer before—"Just for the fun of the thing," he said, and had forgotten her six weeks afterward, without the slightest idea that the grim Gorgon of a mamma might come some fine day and hold him to his word and vow.

We had tried hard to frighten him, but he only laughed at us; and so he went on, moving like a king in society—said society in this most progressive land being composed of materials similar to the family of the good old lady who informed the census taker that they were "mostly boys and girls."

Thus he was in unfair danger of being spoiled by the soft, sweet, and silly young women who make up the many of most fashionable circles. Who would have them otherwise? **Marry! not I!**

and marry could not they if they were. So out upon that depraved philosopher who perniciously desires fashionable young ladies to aim at wearing on their fair brows the insignia of a royal womanhood; brows radiant with the beauty of souls, large, deep, and spiritual. Granting that he is a philosopher, he would certainly be the merest bumpkin of a logician did he not know that such undesirable merit would fatally disturb the admirable balance now patent between the sexes in Young America.

I was just turning the knob of Appletons' door to enter, when my handsome young friend came suddenly in sight. He dashed up to me in his quick, joyous way, and, seizing my disengaged hand, cried out "Well, Auntie Fantie, what is the last piece of mischief on the bulletin?"

I felt a guilty blush rising as I retorted, "Oh, yes! you ask me that, you naughty scamp, because it is your own most besetting sin. It seems to me you are forever in Broadway. You spend your time pretty much as Satan is said to do in the book of Job, 'passing to and fro on the earth and walking up and down on it.'"

"I hope you don't think I resemble Satan in

other respects ? ” said he, with a low bow, glancing at his boot and touching one of the handsome curls on his forehead.

“ Cloven hoofs and horns ? Well ! ” (I pretended to meditate) “ well, it pains me to say that you are so headstrong, and so headlong, and so—”

“ On and so forth, you know ; ” he laughed good-naturedly, then stopping suddenly and looking down upon me with a ridiculous air of paternal gravity, and rolling his words in his mouth like the comic man in Ravel’s pieces, or the eminent tragedian,—pumped out, “ My most estimable aunt (this was only my brevet title), “ an impossible little bundle of virtues like yourself cannot appreciate the necessity of cultivating a few, a *very* few wild oats. They—”

“ COME,” said a low voice of honeyed sweetness.

We both turned quickly round, and the boy’s face crimsoned furiously as his gaze met the eyes, large, shining, and black, of a most beautiful woman. Above the forehead, whiter than the purest ivory, was parted raven hair, glossy, luxuriant and waving ; the aquiline nose, with the thin, curved nostril, would have given a supremely haughty expression to her face had it not been for the en-

chanting sweetness of the rosy, dimpling mouth, which now disclosed small, white teeth, of flashing, almost startling brilliancy.

Her dress was dark, plain, and extremely elegant; a tone of the highest breeding seemed to pervade her entire person, and yet—and yet, alas! an inscrutable something, which shot down into my heart like a leaden bolt, told me that she was only a splendid ruin—a lost life for this world.

He raised his hat to me, and was moving quickly away, when I caught his hand and whispered imploringly, “Oh, Arthur! your mother! *don't* go, don't go with *her*!”

Angry now at my interference, he broke rudely away, and the two passed down the street, the woman turning upon me a glance blazing with defiance and hatred, while the mouth in the same tone of enthralling sweetness uttered the words, “*I have his promise—he is mine.*”

It had all passed in a moment; and, while my heart was throbbing with grief at this most painful discovery, not one of the passing crowd so gayly dressed, save two Sisters of Charity who came trailing solemnly by, but supposed that what I have

now related was merely the leaving of one acquaintance to join another.

I dropped my veil, for scalding tears were swelling in my eyes, and, entering the great book store, I took up the first volume I chanced upon, pretending to read and trying to compose myself.

Something ought to be done—*must* be done to save my friend's darling; her heart would surely break if he were lost. She had been so faithful to her duty. From his lisping babyhood he had been taught to pray at her knee, and the divine lessons of the Book of books had been lovingly impressed upon him by precept and example. Until his seventeenth year he had been in everything perfect—perfect to our finite eyes—so beautiful and so good! and since then we had only thought him a little wilful once in a while.

The fairest woman might have envied the dazzling clearness of his complexion, radiant with health, and yet so delicate that it would have seemed effeminate had not the beautiful features been exceedingly bold and masculine, and the glance of his blue eye as sharp and *straight out* as an eagle's. His hair, of the brightest golden brown, lay in masses of loose rings all over his

handsome head. He was fully six feet in height, with unusual breadth of shoulder ; and his strength, even at this time, was so great that only the day before, when I was at his mother's, and the servant had entered and announced dinner, he had caught me up suddenly under one arm, and his mother under the other, and, in spite of our laughing struggles, had carried us through the length of her drawing rooms, and placed us in our chairs at the table.

As a lad, his mother, with the rarest good sense, had made his home the most delightful place in the world to him. Many and many a Saturday had he rushed into the house, with half a dozen great noisy boys at his heels, and, shouting out, "Mother! dear mother! we are all going to dine with you!" would go dashing up stairs three steps at a time with a "Come on, fellows, and wash your hands;" and in a few moments would make his appearance in the dining room with his companions, all duly brushed and washed, in perfect confidence of a hearty welcome. And many were the whispered commendations which the boys made to each other, at these improvised dinner parties, of "I say! what a jolly mother Arthur's got!" "She's

great!" I am afraid I must record that one of them said, "She's *bully!*"

Now this must mean something very fine, from the universal assent which the opinion obtained, but it sounds to me *very coarse* in connection with a lady of such gentle breeding and admirable courtesy. In fact, it sounds very coarse in *any* connection—but never mind! they all admired her tremendously, and considered her far more "jolly" and the other word than the roast chickens and cranberry jam.

But all this was in Arthur's innocent and beautiful boyhood. Was the dawning of his still more beautiful manhood to be clouded by the stormy rise of an unholy passion? Ah! no. Heaven forbid it! I would watch and pray and work to prevent it. It would be my duty to do so at any sacrifice. I would not tell his mother—at least not now. There was no need of fastening this vulture upon her heart if he turned back in time.

With a great sigh I dismissed these grief-laden thoughts from my mind, and, putting down the book, of which I did not know even the title, I approached the counter on which numberless stereoscopic pictures and portraits, and an endless variety

of admirably-executed *cartes de visite* were displayed.

Making my wishes known to a gentleman of exceedingly prepossessing manners, who presided at the desk, I was immediately put through the following preliminaries :

I was to find a small boy, and hand him an order which the pleasant gentleman had filled in my behalf. A glance, and three steps brought me to a small boy standing on one foot, the other raised up behind him quite out of sight, and planted flat against a pillar to steady himself.

He was deeply engaged in making a clucking noise with his tongue against the roof of his mouth.

"Oh ! you are are an old hen ! I thought you were a small boy," I said, very solemnly.

The little urchin grinned, took the paper, looked at it, dropped his foot, and uttering the cabalistic words "Follow me," commenced a march in double-quick time, which took us through the entire length of the store, and straight out of the back door into Mercer street.

Slightly surprised at this, but amiably confident of the integrity of intention which governed this singular proceeding on the part of the small boy, in

whose chubby face there did not lurk the faintest foreshadowing of traitorous ambush or murderous trap-door intentions, I followed obediently. He crossed over, went down the street a little, entered a door, mounted two flights of stairs, took four steps to the right, turned round and gave me grin number two ; opened the right hand door, and with a sniff of satisfaction, ushered me into the photographic rooms. Then handing me my order, he took one hop to the door, one skip to the stairway, one jump to each flight, and was gone.

Barring the scent of the chemicals which do not exhale precisely the gales of Araby the Blest, I found myself in a very cheerful-looking, pleasant place.

Resting on one side of the room was a large movable scene, sufficiently well painted, intended for the benefit of the romantically inclined, who by its aid could perpetrate an innocent fraud upon their friends ; giving them to understand that they were then on their travels in the groves of Arcadia, and were at that particular moment about to cross the Sylvan lake, and join a joyous party who were dancing, singing, and flirting on the opposite shore.

There was also a portable, crimson-curtained



window, quite gorgeous, with a respectable quantity of fashionably frescoed wall on either side; through which the pensive or the deeply intellectual might be discovered and portrayed, as looking at the silvery moon, or a three story waterfall, or a very large book, the larger the better, resting upon its ledge.

A heavy dark blue curtain fell from ceiling to floor, mid-wise across the room, separating, as I soon discovered, His Majesty the sun's studio from this outer reception room. This curtain was slightly drawn up at one extremity, and when I entered, two persons were standing just within the opening conversing. I could see that one of them was a man of stately proportions. The other, hidden entirely behind the heavy folds of the drapery, I knew was a woman by the voice, which, like a silver bell, was singularly clear, sweet, and vibrating.

In spite of all my well-bred efforts not to listen, while I was doffing bonnet and cloak to be ready for my turn, I could not help catching some parts of the conversation.


The gentleman was evidently preparing to sit for his portrait.

"A young lady," he said, with a little depre-

cating laugh, "can very well make her appearance on a *carte de visite* in a fancy costume and a smirk; but a man, and especially a clergyman, should assume a dignified, serious air, yet one pleasing to his friends."

"Well, Doctor," said the clear, ringing voice, "if you will think of the text you gave us last Sunday morning, you cannot help putting on the same look you then wore, of mingled resolution and joy, as you stood silent (one moment before you began your sermon), that its blessed promise might sink into our hearts;" and her voice deepened and softened, and its melody thrilled me as she repeated the promise which sank deep in *my* heart, "'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'"

He turned at this moment, and I saw who it was. How I longed to say to him, if he would only put on the look of fearless courage with which he had stood up and done battle in his Master's cause a few Sundays before, in *my* hearing; the right expression would come! In the trumpet-like tones of his grand voice, he had denounced those who "did evil that good might come." While he spoke, every application of that terrible text **sank**



deep in my heart, as my own conscience, taking sides with him, sat in judgment upon me. Convicted and convinced, I had gone sadly home, resolved thenceforth to do no evil, for the coming of any good whatever. Alas! for the resolutions made in one's own strength! That very week had witnessed my fall from grace. Every evening, I had assisted at the Great Fair in selling at the table of my beautiful friend Mrs. R., and with might and main had set forth the brilliant results of *raffling*; the immense good to the poor that would come of this very genteel sort of—must I say it?—gambling; and I had induced nine tenths of those who had listened to my specious orations to try their luck. The forgotten text and broken promises now stared me in the face.

Soon, a white, sacerdotal robe flashed past the opening, and I saw that this brave Soldier of Heaven, dressed in his outward armor, was ready for the artist.

The next instant, the clear voice said, "Doctor, no one likes to be looked at when they are having their likeness taken; I will go away."

The lady came into the room where I sat. She was tall and dark, with large, beautiful eyes, a sweet

and intellectual expression, and that indefinable air of refinement which pervades the entire person of an inborn gentlewoman. She was without bonnet or cloak, and her dress of black silk, three or four inches below the waist was confined by a ribbon, as I thought, bound round, drawing it tightly in, and making a sort of puff above at the very top of the skirt, for no reason that I could divine.

What did it mean? You will understand my puzzling over this, when you call to mind that the autocrat, Fashion, had at present decreed that there should be no trimming, save at the very edge of the dress; and no one but Mrs. Bloomer among women, and Mr. Greeley among men, would dare to dress after an "ism," and send fashion to the —. Hum! I don't know where they send her.

But I do know, that from my earliest childhood to the present moment, I have been tormented with an abnormal quantity of Mother Eve's failing. Ask questions, I must. Examine objects of curiosity, I do at any risk. Sometimes the result has been edifying and satisfactory. More times I have been compelled to reflect at my leisure upon the deplorable fate of Blue Beard's wife, etc.; and to wish that Blue Beard, Epinethus, and my husband had

locked up his wife, Pandora and me, singly and separately, before we had gone and opened doors and boxes, and asked questions, which were none of our business.

But I *must* ask; and this time the result was—
What it was I will tell you.

I approached the lady with a mincing step and deprecating smile; and in the “coaxiest” tones I could muster, said, “Madam, will you permit me to ask you an impertinent question?”

She drew up just a perceptible atom; then smiling, simply answered, “Yes.”

“What is that you wear round your dress?”

“A yard of black silk elastic.”

“Hem! But why do you wear it?”

“To hold up my dress in unpleasant weather.”

“Hold up! how?”

“Thus: the ends are sewed securely together; I put it over my head, and a short distance down on the skirt of my dress. I pull my dress up so;” she continued, suiting the action to the word, and greatly increasing the size of the puff above; “and you observe, it lifts it from the ground higher or lower, at my pleasure. I have used pages and other contrivances, but I find this much the best

of any. Of course, my cloak covers the machinery."

"Ah yes! how very nice! What an excellent idea! Thank you! I should like to adopt it."

She bowed; and just then the clergyman, looking grand and stately in his white and flowing robes, emerged from the draped-up curtains. There was such a winning smile upon his face, and he looked so completely the embodiment of those lines from Tennyson's "In Memoriam,"

"And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of Gentleman,"

that I felt that words, spoken with courtesy, would meet with a like return; so I ventured to ask, "Are you executed, sir?"

"I believe I am," he answered smiling, "and you are going to be executed, I see; I hope it will be well and thoroughly done. I shall wait to see it."

I laughed, thanked him, and went in.

The first thing that caught my eye was a well-painted scene of the broad aisle of an immense church. The impression of "a dim, religious light," falling in slant rays from the stained windows, was

conveyed with considerable skill. I immediately intimated that I would be taken as if in church.

The artist bowed; and with gentle courtesy placed me in the position his quick eye and multifarious experience suggested, as the best for my coming out of the trial with éclât. He twitched my drapery here, he twitched it there; he put an obtrusive thumb and two fingers into banishment; he gently moved my head in a more erect position; though I told him that I had a ridiculous lackadaisical habit of holding it very much on one side; he softly smoothed a stray crimple of my hair, and then he dragged up behind me a tremendous pair of pincers. (I don't know *what* the right name is, I'm sure.) It was fastened to a perpendicular iron pole and standard; and with this horrible machine he proceeded to clutch my head.

"Oh don't!" I cried; "I won't be fastened into that abominable thing! I will *not*."

"It is necessary, madam," said the artist.

"Not at all! It will make my eyes start out of their sockets! It will jerk my chin forward! I shall be impelled to run my tongue out to keep from choking! I will sit as still as Judge ——

when he listens, fast asleep, to a suit *against* the corporation."

"It will steady the pulsations," persisted the artist, firmly, yet with perfect courtesy. "See—I will arrange it so that it will scarcely touch your head."

I grumbled, and asked him when he had gotten it from the Inquisition; and called it various unhandsome names, and lamented that so well-meaning a person as myself should be held hard and fast by such a detestable iron vice; but finally submitted, and was well pinched up.

Then the artist went behind his mahogany box, or whatever he calls it; put a thick black cloth over his head, and peeped at me through the glasses.

"How do I look?" I asked.

"Excellently well," he answered. "You know, of course, that in the lens you are represented as upside down."

"Oh! I'm upside down, am I? What an idea! But let me think; I seem to remember that somebody has written, 'The right way to catch God's thought in a landscape is to look at it with inverted eyes;' and here, as if to prove this appar-

ent contradiction, I stand as I am ; and presto ! His sun paints me upside down.”

It seemed almost wicked to laugh ; but I could not help imagining an absurd phase of this theory. I pictured an enthusiastic artist standing in an open field—his legs making the letter A—his head bent down, gazing between them at the landscape with *inverted eyes*—rapt—enchanted—absorbed—and a great bull just going to charge him in front, and upset everything. But I wisely kept this brilliant result of inversion to myself ; and politely simpered, “ Dear me ! it must be the very best way of deciding on a likeness. I shall have all my pictures and portraits at home turned topsy-turvey. I hope you will make me look as amiable as possible.”

“ It will be a correct likeness, I trust. His Majesty the sun will be sure to have you right after his *downright* fashion ; and it will be our endeavor to finish you right in your own *upright* fashion. There ! your pose is admirable—couldn't be better ! Keep quite still, if you please ; I will get the plate and be back in a moment.”

He went away. And now fancy me with my eyes shut, thinking of all the dear little children I

knew and loved, hoping by this to invest my face with an amiable and becoming expression and forget the detestable old pincher into which my head was screwed. Arthur's face came in with the children's, and troubled me.

Suddenly something fell with a quick *SNICK!* A blinding flash shot through my closed eyelids into my brain; a heavy cloth, like a pall, was thrown over me, and speechless with terror, I felt myself caught up; swiftly borne through the room, through the outer room, down the stairs, across the sidewalk, and into a carriage.

The door was shut, and we drove furiously off. I say "we;" for some one was sitting by my side holding the cloth; but silent as death.

We seemed to go through quiet side streets, for the speed of the horses never slackened. After a while we turned a corner; then another; and I knew by the noise and our impeded progress, that we were in Broadway.

A few moments more, and the carriage stopped. I was lifted out, and borne across the sidewalk into some large building; for many steps were taken before I was gently seated; and then the black

cloth seemed to part away from my face like a veil rent in twain.

I found myself in an immense church ; solemn, dark and hung with black ; giving an impression of commingled gloom and grandeur. In a maze of wonder and vague dread, I closed my eyes to gain time for thought ; to make sure that this was not a delirium of the brain. In a few moments I opened them again. That it was all real, I could not doubt. My stupor of terror was fast dissipating ; and though still under terrible excitement, I felt that this was indeed the reality of waking life.

Black everywhere. Draped upon the pulpit, chancel rails, and lecturn ; wreathing the tall pillars, and covering the marble aisles. It needed but the coffin and the pall to complete the mournful picture. All the pews near the altar and far down the broad aisle were occupied ; but, by what seemed a strange accident, while every other pew was appropriately filled, as I thought with persons in the deepest black, the intervening ones were crowded with women in the gayest costumes.

Soon the doors on either side of the chancel opened ; and Sisters of Charity came trailing in two and two, holding long webs of fine white linen.

They spread these upon the altar and chancel rails over and over again ; and every time they did so, an icy wind sweeping in from some unknown quarter, caught the snowy webs and blew them violently aside. While they were yet vainly endeavoring to cover the ominous black with the white cloth, some one came hastily up the aisle saying in a loud voice, " The man and woman about to be married will now enter. All present must close their eyes during the ceremony. If any look up, it will be at his or her deadly peril."

Like succeeding waves, the sitters in every pew bent forward their faces ; I among the rest.

The great doors swung heavily open. There was one moment of deep, breathless silence ; then came a loud and sudden tolling of the bell—between the boding pauses of which, were heard soft, measured footfalls approaching.

Shivering with an indefinable fear of I knew not what, I battled for a moment with the demon which has possessed me all my life long ; then, irresistibly impelled, I raised my head and looked round.

Great Heaven ! Arthur and the beautiful lost woman !

A ghastly pallor had overspread his features,

and his eyes were bent upon the ground ; but her face almost emitted rays. An intense splendor of mysterious, electrical joy shot from her magnificent black eyes, while a triumphant smile curved her lovely mouth and irradiated every feature.

They passed and stood at the chancel rails, and my wildly-wandering eyes followed them.

A clergyman now stood within, book in hand—the same ! the same with whom I had talked at the photographic rooms !

Paralyzed with grief and horror, I saw him open the book. The clang of the tolling bell ceased as I was vainly wishing that, rather than this, Arthur had been brought thither in his confined shroud. His mother's heart was now sure to break.

In a low, musical monotone, which sounded like the echo of the bell, the minister commenced the solemn marriage service. Then louder and deeper came the awful words, “ If any man can show cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter *forever* hold his peace.”

I heard a ghostly whisper like an echo in my ear, “ Do your duty at any sacrifice.” Then his eye

fell upon mine, and in the expression of his grand, silent face, I read, "Be thou faithful unto *death*."

Trembling—gasping—my hands wildly raised aloft, I shrieked out, "I—I—know a cause! Separate them, I pray, for the love of heaven!"

Arthur turned—his face was livid. A bitter struggle convulsed his frame, for he felt the presence of his mother's spirit in my agonized cry. He clung to the chancel rails, but he neither spoke nor stirred.

And she! In her low, sweet voice, which had now a tone that froze my blood, she spoke to the people there: "Look up! You are all mine. With my great wealth I have bought you, souls and bodies. *This woman must die*. Through her you know with whom I would have married. Had I succeeded, we would have fled forever from this cursed spot, where the foul fiend tempted me and I listened, until the very air grew rank and thick, and shut out God from my soul—until this part of the fair earth has become like the deepest hell from which there is no rescue or forgiveness. In other lands I could, I would have repented. I could and would have won from the recording angel a pitying tear, to fall upon and blot out the written history

of my transgressions. I could and would have wrestled and prayed, until a blessed forgiveness had descended like dew upon my parched heart from Him against whom alone I have sinned. Now I have lost ALL."

Then turning to me with a hoarse groan and sob, as if torn out of her breast, she cried, "Oh! woman, woman! could you not leave me this one small ray from heaven?"

A tear like a great diamond rose and trembled on her eyelid for an instant—a pure, bright, crystal drop, in which all the first innocent years of her life lay glistening, trembling, softly entreating for mercy in this hard world for this woman—world-condemned and lost. Another instant, and it was forced violently back; the blood left her cheek, and a murderous glare flashed out from her eyes.

"Go, some of you, and take the ribbon from the lady by the door. I would have this woman garroted. Her eyes that dared to look shall start from their sockets; her tongue that dared to speak shall be forced swollen and blackened from her mouth; her livid and distorted face shall be a horror to look upon!"

All the black-robed women came out of one of

the pews, and, with quick, noiseless steps, went down the aisle toward some person in the distance. The rest kept their places, looking on solemn and still.

Arthur had sunk down against the rails, his face buried in his hands ; and the minister stood erect, rigid, one hand clasping his book, the fore-finger of the other dividing the leaves at the marriage service. As well might he have been a marble man, so statue-like were the lines of his face, so motionless the white folds of his robe. He seemed under the influence of an intense mesmeric spell.

And now a faint sound of supplication reached my ear. Thick clouds must have passed over the sky, for the light through the stained windows cast a brooding gloom through the great church. Looking back, I could but faintly see the ill-omened women surrounding and forcing something violently away from one who vainly sought with desperate struggles to retain it. In another moment they were returning with the same stealthy tread and their ill-gotten possession. I could now perceive the lady. Her large eyes, wild and distended, were gazing at me ; her white lips moving ; her clasped hands were piteously stretched toward me.

I fancied I heard a broken entreaty of "Forgive! forgive me! They tore it from me." Straining my eyes through the gloom, I recognized the lady of whom I had asked questions in the photographic rooms.

Then, with a puzzled dismay I turned, and saw held aloft, in the hands of one of the women with whom she had struggled, the *yard of black silk elastic*.

What had *this* to do with the death that awaited me? Garroted? Where was the cruel iron collar in which my throat was to be crushed?

As if answering my thought, the icy-cold voice said "This will do. Strangling is a more painful death. Go, one of you, into the church yard, and fetch from thence a small but strong bough; it will serve as a tourniquet."

I looked around appealingly with tear-blind eyes at the stony faces; at the distant doors where strong men kept guard; at the lady who sat near them, weeping and helpless; at the marble minister; at Arthur's crouching, shuddering form, and at my pitiless executioner.

No hope anywhere. I might scream, but the utmost cry of my agony would be lost in the roar

and whirl of the crowded street outside, and—in my dread despair I forgot to pray.

They held me fast, and passed the ribbon round my throat ; tied it tightly once, then again with the tourniquet between. I heard the loud beating of my heart ; it seemed tolling for my coming death. In a gasping, choking voice, I implored them not to murder me in this sacred place—anywhere but here—any death but that awful one. Like a rebuking presence from another world, the sun at this moment broke suddenly from the dark clouds, and beams of radiant splendor shot through the great painted windows behind the altar, bathing the fiendish crowd in rays of red and purple glory. One instant they paused, as if they saw an EYE looking down, then *turned away from the light* to their deed of darkness.

Like a panoramic picture, but moving at lightning speed, all the events of my life passed through my brain. They seemed so short and blissful. I thought of my husband, who had loved me all our married years more like a lover than a husband. I wished, with bitter, remorseful tears, that I had never grieved his kind heart and trifled with his love, by many a petulant word and cold return, I

thought of my children, and from the very depth of my tortured heart rose a cry, "Oh, my children! Oh, my children! Nevermore shall I return home, and thrill with joy to hear your flying footsteps coming near and nearer, and feel your twining clasp, and the loving struggle against my face *for the "first kiss."*

In a horrible silence they turned the tourniquet round and round. A stroke of lightning seemed to strike and wither every nerve in my body, and the blood I thought was bursting forth from the pores of my face; my sight became blurred, and the faces around were like the faces of monsters. Dull flames darted from the eyes of the murderous woman on the chancel step. The elastic ribbon gave and yielded, only to prolong my tortures.

They turned again with demoniac strength. My eyes started from their sockets, drops of blood fell slowly from the arched ceiling; a thousand clanging bells rang in my ears, and my tongue burst from my mouth.

Uprose a fiendish shriek, "Turn! turn!" A lurid flash! and the blackness of darkness like a funeral pall came settling down—down.

* * * * *

“Good heavens, madam!” cried an anxious voice, “are you ill?”

Something painful and heavy was drawn away from my throat.

With a mighty effort I opened my eyes; with a mightier I crushed back a flood of hysterical tears, and said quietly enough, “I’m a little hurt; you see what comes of using that terrible thing.”

He saw, indeed, with his physical eyes, and what he saw he understood; but, oh! could he have beheld the delirium of mingled terror, wonder, and gratitude which was raging in my soul! Could he have known that every beat of my heart was chanting in my ear the grateful refrain, “Thank God, it is not real! Thank God, it is not real!” doubtless he would have concluded that I had been seized with sudden madness.

And so I held my peace, except to ask indifferently how long he had been out of the room. He said, “Not more than two minutes.”

During the next two minutes my photograph was taken.

In the wild, sad, *inward* look of the eyes, lies chained the shadowy ghost of those two first awful minutes. It will never leave those pictured eyes.

But the apparition faded and died out of my bodily eyes at the first patter of the distant feet of my children, which came immediately upon my well-known ring of the house-door bell; and the moment I entered, the welcome pressure of their faces against mine for that ineffable prize, "the first kiss," brought the wonted color to my cheek. And oh, my husband! won't I be a good little wife after this!

* * * * *

That night I added to my usual prayers a fervent supplication that Arthur might be arrested on the brink of this precipice, whose swift sides led to the bottomless pit. One stumbling step had already been taken, leaving a bruised and blackened spot upon his soul. I prayed with tears that this might be washed out in his and my Redeemer's blood.

Worn and tired, feeling as if I had in that one day passed through years of sharp suffering, I fell asleep with this prayer still murmuring in my heart and on my lips.

Then I dreamed that an angel floated down out of the boundless, far-off Heaven, with a majestic undulating movement, that made a low, sweet mu-

sic in the air, and folded his wide-spreading, plummy wings close at my bedside. August, beautiful, love divine irradiating his whole person, and filling the room with a soft effulgence like moonlight, I gazed upon him with level hand to shade my eyes from the unaccustomed glory, but not in the least afraid. As he leaned over me I saw, resting in the solemn splendor of his eyes, that wide, tender, never-failing CHARITY which "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." In the solemn splendor of his eyes was resting, ready to start into life, that "joy" which is felt in heaven "over one sinner that repenteth."

He bent to my ear and whispered, in a tone like a flute breathed over still waters, these words, "Thy trance was no fruitless warning. Watch and pray."

Even as he spoke he seemed far away, and the melodious sound of his voice and the radiance of his presence gently faded out, and my sleep became dreamless.

* * * * *

Early the next morning there came a violent ringing of the bell. Before the servant could get to the door it was sharply repeated. With a vague

alarm and still nervous, I ran into the hall just as the door was opened, and Arthur's mother, ghastly and tottering, staggered toward me, with a piercing cry of "Arthur! Arthur!" and sank fainting on the floor.

In an instant I had raised her, and, bending over her, I said, "Oh, my dear friend, what is it? What is it distressing you so?"

"Arthur," she sobbed, in broken murmurs; "he did not come home last night! He has been murdered! He would never have caused me this torture if he were alive! I have waited and watched at the window the whole night. Oh, help me to find what is left of my child!"

"Murdered!!!" The blood rushed madly to my brain, then back to my heart! Terror and dread had seized me! My trance was before me! Yes; Arthur, if not already lost forever, was in deadly jeopardy; but it was his soul—his soul that was in peril. Hell was opening before him, but, God willing, we two women, feeble in ourselves but strong in His might, would close the accursed gates before it was too late.

So, rousing myself, I essayed, gradually and tenderly as I could, to tell her all I knew; what I

had seen the day before ; the wondrous beauty and grace of the woman, and the utter infatuation of the boy. She listened trembling, miserable. Bitter thoughts coursed each other across her breaking heart, and came upon her face as clouds flit over a sad, watery sky. The long years of her love—such utterly unselfish love as none but a mother can give—stood up awful witnesses against him ; and this was the cruel end, and hope seemed dead.

To give her a gleam of comfort I acted hypocrite, and assured her of our certainty of seeing him before the day was over. Heaven forgive me ! for I too was hopeless ; but I cried aloud, “ Courage, dear friend ! We shall save him ! He will return to you repentant, never again to sin ; ” and all the while smiting at my heart was a bludgeon-like voice I could not silence, saying, “ Who lost Mark Antony the world ? ” “ A woman ! ”

Here was a boy of nineteen, his fancy and passions a-blaze, and the woman, high bred, perhaps of exquisite accomplishments and talents, which, like a skilful strategist, she would bring out one after the other to enchain his soul. What fearful odds ! Where was there a shadow of hope ? And once more, as in my trance, I thought, “ To have

seen him in his confined shroud would be sorrow indeed, but this was despair."

It was a case to be carefully kept from friends, and especially relatives; for all the former and not a few of the latter would have found employment by no means disagreeable in lifting up hands and eyes, and ejaculating a never-ending flow of "I told you so's," "I knew what would come of her wicked indulgence." Then they would clap on the microscope to see how my poor friend looked, and cover their uncharitable sniffs and speeches with a flimsy veil of condolence and much advice.

No. We two forlorn women would do as God—not our friends and relatives—would please to direct. And so, after many scalding tears for the exposure to a stranger, the unhappy mother consented that I should call into our councils a captain of police.

I told him the whole story, describing the woman accurately, and showing him a large photograph of Arthur in my possession. I also drew out of my album an exquisite vignette, which I offered to give into his careful keeping. We promised him a large sum of money if he found the boy—if he found him with speed, and, above all,

such secrecy as would enable us to keep this our skeleton from the knowledge of the condoling and sympathetic (? !) world, including friends and relatives.

The man's lynx eyes drank in the features from both pictures, his eyebrows drawn down and together, and his hands curved round the cards like talons. Then, looking up and touching his forehead, he said he had the likeness *there*, and, to my friend's visible relief, handed both back.

"In three days, madam," he said, "perhaps less, I shall have discovered all you wish to know."

My spirits rose like an elastic spring, so much did his intelligent manner give me hope. The expression of his face was such a compound of cunning sagacity and ingenuity, I seemed to feel that he was the veritable Asmodeus who could at will lift the roofs off the houses, and peer down into every room with microscopic minuteness and certainty. I felt that no house, where a chance lurked of finding Arthur, would escape him, and, as he went away, I grew so nervously excited and hopeful that my friend, sitting pallid and despairing by the fire, caught the infection, and we both had a comforting, relieving cry together.

But oh! those three days—those three endless days of suspense and dread—would they never, never come to an end? What momentary fleeting flushes of hope we had! what long, deadly sinkings of despair! How hard I worked to get the poor, crushed mother to taste food or try to sleep. How wan and woeful she looked, walking the live-long day up and down, up and down, her hands now clasped over her head, now pressed upon her throat to still the convulsive working of the muscles, and constrain the painful, hysterical lumps that choked her. She remained with me, for she could not endure the lonely desolation of her own house; and I, in reply to all pertinent and impertinent questions from the aforesaid friends and relations, gave out that Arthur had gone on a travelling expedition, and his mother, not feeling well, had come to pass the time with me.

The days crept lingeringly on. The evening of the third was passing, and we were utterly hopeless and wretched, when there came a quick ring at the bell. My heart leaped in my throat, and my poor friend fell fainting in a chair—she had become so weak with the long-drawn torture of those dreadful days.

The servant came into the room, instantly followed by the police captain.

“Quick, madam!” he cried to Arthur’s mother; “put on your hat and come with me. Don’t stop a moment, or you may be too late.”

His words acted like a spell. “You have found him!” she almost screamed, starting up and clutching at his arm; “Oh, make haste! make haste, and take me to my son—my darling, and may God bless you forever!”

“Shall my husband go with us?” said I, trembling violently.

“I think not,” answered the wise, far-seeing man; “if his mother don’t bring him back, no power on earth can save him.” He turned away, and touched his face with his coat cuff with a quick, irritated gesture, as if angry at himself. Brave and gentle policeman! One in Heaven saw and registered the tear you wiped away.

We hurried on our things, and got into a carriage at the door. Our conductor gave an order, and with delicate tact would have got upon the box; but I begged him to come inside, and we were whirled away.

It was all I could do to keep the poor mother

in her senses. I urged over and over how important it was she should control herself. With her arms clasped tight around my neck, her cheek burning hot, the scalding tears flowing, her breath coming in great gasps, the poor soul prayed aloud for Divine support in whatever might be coming. She implored God to give her back her only child—the child she loved with all her heart and soul and strength.

And now we heard from the man that only that day he had discovered Arthur was living in a large, handsome house, far up one of the leading streets in the city. The house was owned and occupied by a beautiful woman upon whose fair fame a dark cloud rested. He had watched the door the whole day, first engaging a hack to stand out of sight round the corner. This proved to have been a most fortunate thought, for in the last half hour a carriage had stopped at the door. Arthur and the woman, with two others, had jumped in and had been driven away, he (the policeman) following in the hack until he had seen them stop and enter a house not far from mine; then ordering his man to drive furiously, he had come for us. * * *

We were now at the door. The other carriage

was still waiting. Our conductor, whose life, spent in detecting all kinds of crime, which rendered him steady of nerves indeed, but failed to rob him of a kind and tender heart, helped my friend out, whispering, "Courage, madam! Your son will return to you; he will not refuse his MOTHER;" and we went up the steps and rang the bell. When the door was opened, we did not wait to ask questions, but silently and at once entered the front parlor.

It was not lighted, and one gas burner in the back room revealed to us a group, standing before a clergyman in Episcopal robes, their backs to us. Great Heavens! what words struck our ears!

"I require and charge you both, as ye shall answer at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, ye do now confess it."

He paused—

Trembling in every limb, pale as ashes, her eyes dilated and wild as a maniac's, her heart on fire, her arms uplifted, Arthur's mother rushed forward, shrieking, "I—I—know! She is unworthy to be

called his wife! Arthur! Arthur! my son! my son!"

What a ghastly face he turned upon her! His guilt, vast, unmeasured, rose darkening before him; a shuddering remorse seized him as he looked at her so changed, broken hearted, almost lifeless. He shrank and cowered before this apparition of what was only a few days before his beautiful and happy mother. She seemed to be lying in a new-made grave—a grave he had dug. The unholy love fled swiftly out of his heart, and he saw himself as he was—a monster, a coward, and a fool.

Then I heard a low, repentant groan. "Oh mother! darling!" The next instant she was clasped in his arms, both sobbing convulsively.

I stood bewildered as in a dream. Amazed, almost paralyzed—icy chills coursing each other through my frame, as I witnessed this painful realizing of my strange trance. I stirred not. I seemed turned into stone; when the woman suddenly recognizing me as the one who had warned Arthur against her, came swiftly toward me with the step and spring of a panther, her purple black eyes glaring and hoarsely whispered, "Ah wretch! Is it you? You have driven me away from the

gates of Heaven. You are plunging me back into the hell I would have lived down, and so escaped from. Oh woman! woman! on your soul be my future guilt."

At these last dreadful words, I seized her hand and cried, "Oh, no! no! not that! see! I implore you; go away from here; there is still happiness, at least there is the peace of sin repented left for you. Go where you are not known, comfort and help the poor, the weak hearted and sorrowful. God will forgive you. He has said to one like you, 'Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven.' Oh go to Him my sister, my poor lost sister; wash His feet with your tears, and He will give you peace."

Then I curled my arms round her neck, and pressed my face, wet with tears, against her cheek, and kissed her, murmuring, "Promise me, oh promise me."

There was silence for a moment. Then I felt her shrink and tremble; and looking up, saw in those beautiful black eyes two big tears; they swelled, brimmed over, and fell like dew from Heaven upon my hand that rested on her neck. Her noble face was now all pale, and unutterably sad. She took my hand, and kissed it with a gentle,

humble grace past all description ; then lifting from her neck a small black elastic cord, to which was attached an exquisite likeness of Arthur, with one wild sob, one wild pressure of her lips upon the inanimate ivory, she threw it over my head and whispered, "Take this ; you have conquered."

As she spoke, two more enormous tears welled up and quietly rolled down her pale cheeks. "Will you take a blessing from one so lost as I?" Her very voice was so full of those great pitiful tears ; they seemed drowning my heart ; I could not answer. I could only kiss her cheek.

"Then God bless you—you have spoken the first kind words I have heard from the pure lips of one of my own sex, since I became the thing I am. God bless you—your husband—your children—for you must have children—or you would not have *so loved me*. God bless you on your *death bed*. Oh ! may *that* be peace!—the peace of God that passeth all understanding. Oh ! how well I know the words of that loving benediction. I too, many times, in my far-away innocent days have knelt to hear them. Farewell, Arthur. I thank Heaven you have been saved from sin and me. We shall never meet again."

No words can give any idea of the beautiful, sorrowful, loving face she turned upon him; and his was hidden upon his mother's shoulder. With a gasping sigh she bowed her head and murmured, "It is best so, he has forgotten me, while I, already old in agony, must suffer for ever and ever." Then, beckoning to her companions, who had been silent, awe-struck spectators of the sad scene, they followed her out, and a moment after, I heard them drive away.

And now I strove to collect my senses, and look about me. The clergyman stood there; fear and misgiving depicted on his countenance. In a few words I explained why all this had passed. The good man listened in terror, and deeply, almost tearfully, expressed his gratitude that he had been prevented in time from completing this disastrous marriage ceremony. I could not help commenting with some severity upon the readiness with which ministers married all who came to them, without hesitation or inquiry. I declared it was their solemn duty to investigate, where there seemed a shade of mystery or concealment.

He answered with great courtesy that he had received a lesson that evening he hoped he should

never forget, and once more thanked God that it had come in time to save so great misery.

We went away. Arthur sorrowfully clinging to his mother; her long years of self-sacrificing love crowding upon his memory, and swelling his really noble heart with anguish and remorse.

Thank God he was saved. To his mother alone he confessed with many a burning flush and struggle his temptation and his weakness. He will never grieve her again. He has torn from his heart those seeds of sin before they had time to take deep root, to be cut down afterward as a tree falling under the axe, leaving him only a blot on the earth. The calm, tender love of a son for his mother keeps watch and ward at the door. That this has cost him many a throe of secret anguish—none who know the almost superhuman temptations besetting a boy of nineteen, *with money almost unlimited*, to spend in this great and wicked city, will doubt; but it is done; and we all "watch and pray."

His mother and I are trying to find some young girl, pure and lovely, that the fading shadow of this unholy passion may be utterly quenched in the brightness of an innocent love. *I* may succeed; but *I* don't know about her. *I* never saw a mother yet

who thought any girl, no matter how good and lovely, worthy of her son. They invariably cast a halo of perfection over their male children, and do not love the girls unreasonably. Unfair, but like a woman.

* * * * *

Will some psychological reasoner explain to me my trance? And will the photographic artists stop fastening people up in iron vices; which caused me to have the trance; and will the lovely lady, without whose *yard of black silk elastic* I should not have been done to death in my trance, come to see me. I think she owes me a visit for the suffering she brought upon me, and I feel we should grow to be good friends. That my curiosity and not the elastic got me into trouble, we will keep in the background. This is all.

* * * * *

There were a few silent moments. My narrative had saddened them all. At last Harry said, "I have read somewhere, dear aunt, that it is almost certain the longest dream occupies but an instant of time. In your trance the heavy iron falling suddenly, must have struck a nerve so sharply, as to cause physical unconsciousness; while at the same time

the intense pain quickened the brain to delirium, in those two awful moments. Then as you entered the photographic rooms, depressed, miserable about Arthur, what you feared for him, took form, mixed strangely enough with all you had seen, talked about, and done while with him and afterward."

"Yours is a very plausible theory," remarked young Appreciate. "No stupor could utterly deaden the tortured nerve, and the pain distorted and made monstrous the events which lived over again in her brain. But it is a most strange experience! One must believe that a wisdom greater than ours had shaped this dream or trance to its wondrous ending. How without it would the widow's son have been saved? and her heart spared from suffering, for which the world has no name! Who can doubt that He directs all things?" and the young man looked up with a solemn gesture.

Then his uncle, in an earnest voice, far different from the cynical, loud-scolding one he usually assumed to cover a great kind heart, said, "Ah! what a terrible, fathomless sea is life to him who sails without 'Prudence at the helm,' and religion, pure and simple, for his magnetic guide, with finger pointed to heaven.

"Then dark clouds and wild winds may lower and beat as they will. God be thanked, my dear boy," laying his hand kindly on his nephew's shoulder, "that you learned early to walk in His ways. Your mother, with her last breath, thanked Him for the good son who had never caused her to shed one bitter tear. It is a proud heritage to possess."

The young man's lip quivered painfully, and his eyes filled with tears. Although three years had passed since he had held his mother's hand, while watching the shadow of death passing slowly down over her beloved face, he could not yet think of her without grief for his great loss. The sound of a bell tolling still caused his heart to beat; he never entered the room which had been hers without a dreary sense of its emptiness; his gentle and loving nature, though ever cheerful, still mourned for his mother.

Then sweet cousin Adelaide said in a low, musical voice, as if answering her own thoughts, "With pure religion and perfect faith in our Blessed Saviour, life is calm, beautiful, and peaceful. No clouds so heavy, no fateful winds so wild, but that with faith, we may reach our blessed haven at last. Oh, that my dear brother had this faith!" She

bent over her netting, and crystal tears fell from her eyes, and dropped upon the gold and crimson threads.

Poor little heart ! Her brother, my brave boy, had gone with the first, to fight, perhaps die, for his country. Loyal, brave, impetuous, there was but one thing wanting ; he was *not* a soldier of Christ. She had given him at their parting, while clinging weeping on his breast, her own little Bible. We could only pray for him now.

And so it came to pass that my strange story awoke some chord of regret or grief in all our hearts, and we went quietly and somewhat sadly home.

CHAPTER VIII.

WE assembled the next evening with considerable curiosity as to who intended to give us the next intellectual feast. We had made no previous arrangement, and were both surprised and pleased when my sweet girl, with many a blush and little coaxing kiss printed on my cheek, produced a neat white roll of paper, and begged me to read her "contribution."

"Not at all!" I cried, hardening my heart. "Every man for himself; woman likewise. So say, 'Ahem,' Addie, and begin."

"Please, dear mamma," coaxed the young girl, "it is about your aunt, and my great aunt; ~~o~~ dear, I can't."

"You *recant*, you mean, you naughty puss! I never thought you would talk 'cant' about such an unaffectedly good woman as your great-aunt.

You should be made to go stand in the corner, till you say you are sorry."

Upon this, young Appreciate could hold out no longer; but earnestly entreated that he might have the honor, the great pleasure of reading Miss Adelaide's manuscript.

I cried "No! no!" but was ignominiously voted down; and in a sort of joyful haste, he possessed himself of the paper, upon which her fair small hand had rested; and in a clear and admirable voice, began:

AUNT MARY,*

A SKETCH, BY A GIRL OF FIFTEEN.

It is my opinion that in spite of my being a very young girl, I might, without exciting much surprise, personate the character of a respectable old lady; for all kinds of antiquities seem to agree extremely well with me.

Thus, an old book has a peculiar charm for me;

* Also published in a juvenile, to be called "The Doll's Wedding, and other Stories." The beautiful, simple, and æsthetic thoughts which grace this little sketch, will perhaps be more thoroughly enjoyed "by children of a larger growth." The author has therefore inserted it here. It was written by her daughter at the age mentioned above.

an old dress always sits better than a new one ; and certainly every one will allow that there is no comfort in the world equal to a pair of old slippers.

But most particularly am I fond of old ladies and gentlemen, with their quaint stories of the days when they were young ; those magical days, when the sun shone quite differently from now, " so much longer and brighter ;" the soft summer breezes were sweeter and cooler, and the winter snows were not the six inch deep affairs we have at present, but were up to the second story windows ; then the birds sang far more sweetly than they ever do now-a-days ; the peaches were twice as large, the apples three times, and the gentlemen bowed four times lower and twenty times more respectfully.

The dearest of all my elderly relatives is my mother's aunt, my great-aunt Mary. I wish you could see her sitting in a corner of the fireplace, in a funny little black rocking chair of hers, that is no one knows how old, with a mosaic patchwork cover on the back, always busy with her knitting or sewing, and just the sweetest, dearest, little old soul in the world ; though she is my *great-aunt*, I am so much larger and stronger, that I could, if I pleased, catch her up in my arms and run all over

the house with her, without her being able to help herself. I mean to try it some time.

Aunt Mary's face is wrinkled ; but her blue eyes are still clear and bright ; her soft gray hair is parted over a placid brow ; her smile is very sweet, and her voice so pleasant and kindly, that you feel as though you could never do enough for her, and you love her instinctively the very first time you see her. I believe that is the reason everybody calls her " Aunt Mary." It seems as if they could not help it ; but *I* think it is a great liberty.

Aunt Mary is not one of those *old* old ladies, who think little folks should sit upright on a hard wooden bench, with nothing to rest their poor little spines against, and nothing to do but stare at the fire and twirl their thumbs.

She took a great nephew of hers to church, not long ago ; a little bit of a fellow, and I think a perfect darling. Stanny had never been to church before, and he was so surprised with the great painted windows, and the quantity of people, that he sat up, in wondering silence, as grave as a judge ; and Aunt Mary was just thinking to herself " How well Stanny behaves ! really I am quite proud of him ! " when suddenly the organ struck up very loud ; and

Stanny, well remembering the organs in the street, which he always ran to the window to see, shouted out loud, "Why, Aunt Mary! there's an organ! but where is the monkey?"

Of course everybody around laughed; how could they help it? and dear old Aunt Mary, instead of wanting to shake his head off, as some old ladies would, laughed too; but whispered to him to speak more softly next time, and gave him a gum drop out of her pocket.

She loves all the children, and is the soul of indulgence to her little nephews and nieces; she don't scold a bit, when they run away with her snuff box, as Fanny and I have often done; although she is naturally very quick-tempered, her patience and forbearance are beautiful to observe.

Aunt Mary never uses spectacles; she reads the finest print, and stitches far more neatly than I can, without them; and those faded, but small and pretty hands, have knit more stockings for the poor, and made more patchwork bedquilts than I have time to count.

Then she is very lively, and has often made me scream with laughter; her comical expressions, with many a quiet, sly cut at our faults and non-

sensical notions, and her funny stories, are far better than the writings of many an author who tries to write as though his fun was not the hardest work in the world for him, instead of coming right from his heart like my dear Aunt Mary's. Time has not soured her, as it does some old people; you never see her going about, with her brows tied up in—oh! such a hard knot! with a querulous moan of “W-h-e-r-e's my spectacles? why d-o-n't you come and light my fire? who's got my snuff box? oh dear!” Not at all; but it is, “Do let me read you this in the paper,” a noble act of heroism or a funny anecdote, that has excited her admiration or laughter; and presently we will all be admiring or laughing with her, to her immense satisfaction.

You can't get Aunt Mary to put on a hoop skirt, or wear gaiter boots. She remains steadfastly by her narrow skirts and prunella shoes.

Once, as a very great favor, she permitted me to try on a dress of hers, which she wore to her first ball, when she was about sixteen years old. You may imagine what a singular figure I made in it, when I tell you that there were but two breadths in the skirt, and tiny gores at the sides; while the

sleeves stood out as though they were lined with buckram, and the waistband was just under my arms. The material was the thickest of white silk, with lovely bunches of roses all over it. You perceive that fashions have changed considerably since she was a girl; and I often think how queer it must seem for her to look back on all the fashions that have come up since her first ball dress.

And now I will tell you something very interesting indeed about Aunt Mary. She has seen the great General Washington alive; and I would be willing to be just as old if I could say the same.

Yes, my dear old aunt is of another and past century. It always seems to me as if she should be dressed with the powder, high-heeled shoes, and ruffles of real lace that she wore long ago.

But in any dress we shall always love her dearly; for she is to us a kind monitor, a sincere friend, and a simple, earnest Christian. God bless dear Aunt Mary!

“Well!” exclaimed Mr. Growler, emphatically, slapping his knee, “That is equal to any paper in ‘Addison’s Spectator!’ It is a beautiful cabinet picture! Miss Adelaide, I am your most obedient

humble servant ;” whereupon he gravely rose and made her one of the grandest, most elegant bows, I have ever witnessed.

She started up, and gave him in return a surprised but very fine little courtesy ; then, looking in his face, and seeing the broad beams of kindness and admiration in his eyes, she put both hands into his, and somehow or other, the next moment the old gentleman had kissed her blooming cheek !

We were electrified ! and oh ! what eyes young Appreciate did make ! he looked as if on the point of kissing his uncle to gather the bloom from his lips of which he was sure her cheek had been robbed ; or else of giving him a good beating. His eyes flashed ; his teeth came together with a snap ! his very whiskers curled with indignation and envy ; and he muttered, “ Confound his impudence ! ”

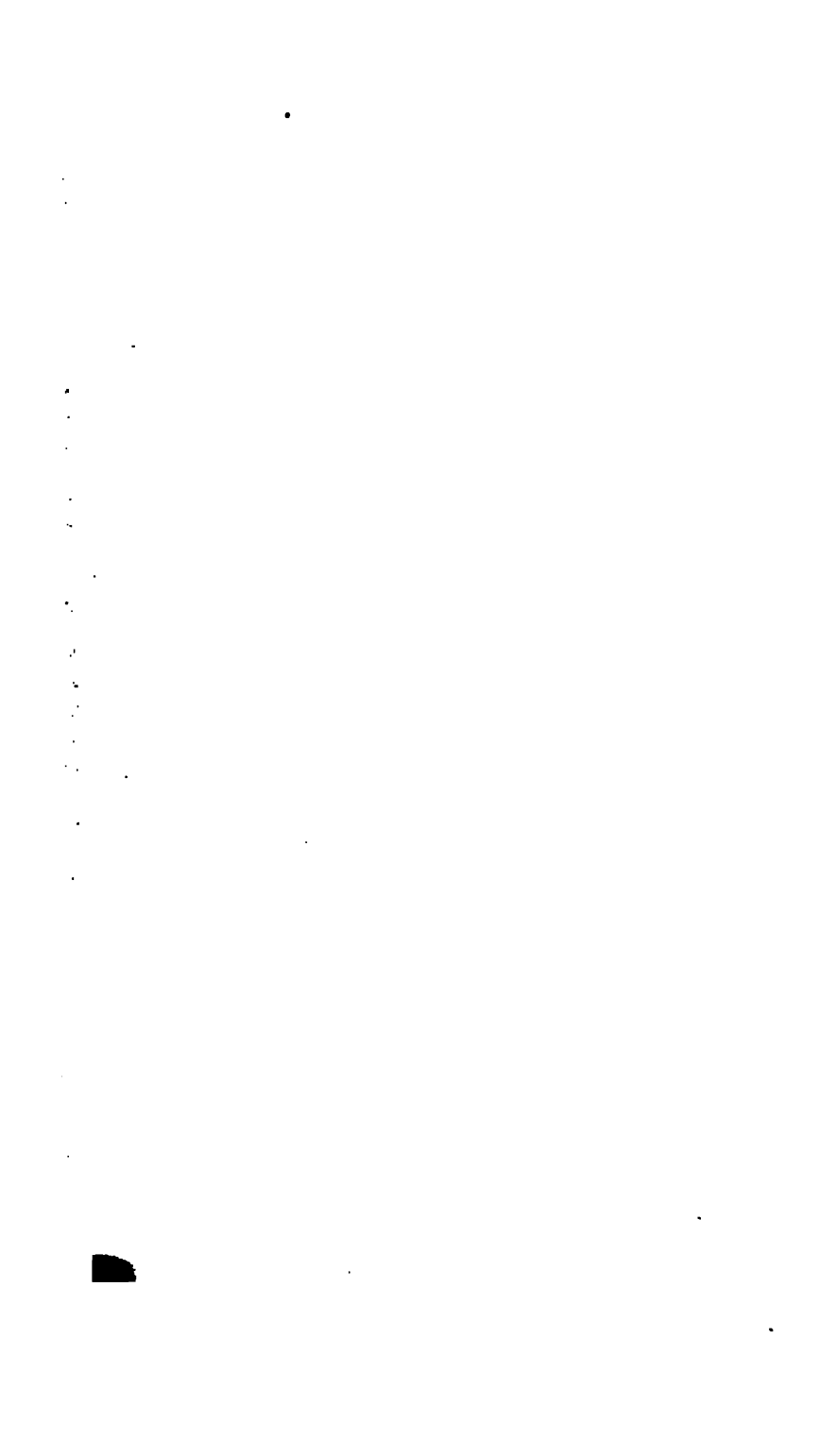
Blush followed blush on our dear girl’s face, as we, with eager emulation, following “ in the footsteps of our illustrious predecessor,” pressed kisses and praises upon her ; the first from the little wife and me ; the latter from the gentlemen, which were all they dared ; for they were afraid if the chuckling self-congratulation of the good old “ fossil ”—
“ Some comfort, after all, in being old enough for a

grandfather ! ”—were made the text, or pretext for a similar application on their parts, she would not be able to *see it* ; and they wisely refrained from running their heads into danger. Young Appreciate’s biceps muscles were somewhat famous ; he really looked dangerous ; and for that matter so did she ; though scarcely more than a child in years, there was a latent dignity about her girlish person, and a majesty, down deep in her violet eyes, ready to flash lightning at the slightest disrespect. She was a girl who would have extended her fair hand to be saluted, with all the royal grace of a queen, and considered the honor bestowed fully as great ; and as to giving her *carte de visite* to any and every Tom, Dick or Harry who petitioned for it, I well knew that the simple idea was an affront ! For this reason and no other, I have not ventured to show you her pictured face :—her graceful, girlish form ; and the back of her beautiful head, with its soft brown curls, hastily sketched without her knowledge, as she sat half musing, half reading at the window one day, being the extent of my daring. Dear me ! What a laughing, scolding kiss I shall get, when she sees it for the first time in this book !

I watched young Appreciate the rest of the



I have not ventured to show you her pictured face.—p. 176.



evening in a very unfair and unhandsome manner. I saw him surreptitiously sip, with a beatified aspect, a little chocolate she had left in her cup, pretending in a shame-faced way that he had mistaken it for his own ; and looking in her face with an explanatory expression, which ended in one of lingering tenderness ; and she, blushed more and more ; her violet eyes grew darker and softer, and the dewy bloom, on cheek and lip, deepened under his eloquent eyes, as the roses blush under the warm sun's rays.

They were certainly a case.

And the little wife and I had a good long talk about it the very next morning. I rather liked him, I confess.

I don't know if this incipient love affair had anything to do with it ; but Mr. Wilton gravely proposed to give the next story ; then he looked at his wife, with such a comical smile that she doubled up her little white hand into a snowball, and threatened him with it, if he dared to tell any stories about her. From this we conjectured that something spicy would be served up at the next meeting ; and so we left with the pleasantest anticipations.

CHAPTER IX.

“WELL,” said Mr. Growler at our next evening, “if the story to-night is to be a sentimental, love-sick tale, I for one will go walk up and down outside till it is finished. That charming sketch of ‘Aunt Mary’ fell like dew drops on my heart; and I won’t have them scorched up by some horrible love and murder nonsense. Couldn’t one of you write a story about a mummy, and leave living persons and feelings to rest for a while?”

We all laughed, and Harry said, “You have read about the Yankee mummies?”

“No!” we chimed.

“Is it possible! I will tell you as well as I can remember; I read the story very long ago, but do not know who wrote it. Well. There is a town very far down East indeed, where the air is so remarkably salubrious that the people cannot die, try their best; they gradually dry up; and their

shrivelled faces grow like the walnut dolls you make for pen wipers. When they are so dry that they rattle like paper, they are put separately into bags, and hung up all round the interior of the churches, which is considered nearest to being buried. The summer winds blowing through the churches cause these bags to bounce against each other, and the constant rattling serves to remind the living of what they must come to at last.

“It so happened that a lawsuit, pending at a certain time, could not be satisfactorily settled because some connecting link was wanting; and this could only be supplied by a good old gentleman who had been bagged and hung up about a hundred years before. What to do they could not tell! At last one of the Down-easters, more enterprising, if possible, than the rest, proposed to take Deacon Dusenberry down, soak him for an hour or two in warm water, and see what would come of it.

“No sooner said than done. To their astonishment and delight, the old gentleman after a while seemed to soften and spread; then he slowly opened one eye, and perceptibly winked at the company; his other eye seemed considerably tougher, as it remained obstinately shut. Presently his arms

flapped up and down, like fins in the water; he lifted his head, and in a cracked, wheezy voice, like the wind whistling through an old pair of bellows, squeaked out, 'Massy sakes! What on airth are ye disturbin of me fur? Speak up spry, or you won't get nothin out o' me, I tell you!'

"Upon that they made short work of the case in hand; the deacon came out splendidly with the ardently-desired information; then telling them to drain him well, to keep him from moulding, they put him in the bag, hung him up again, and there he is peacefully rattling in the breeze to this very day."

Shouts of laughter, mingled with "O for shame! do stop, Harry!" from his wife, greeted this ridiculous narrative, and put us in sympathetic humor to enjoy what was coming, for we saw by Mr. Wilton's mischievous glances, as he unrolled his manuscript, that he had been writing something which somebody would declare he ought not to have written.

Holding his paper tight in his hands, for fear it might be snatched away, he began by saying, "This story is about a ghost, which I presume Mr. Growler will allow approximates to a mummy story; but a

ghost of such a peculiar style, that I was puzzled how to begin my account."

"At the beginning, I should say," suggested Mr. Growler.

"Well, I began before the beginning, and have mentioned one or two frisky antecedents of my ghost's, which may amuse you. I call my story

BE SURE YOU'RE RIGHT, THEN FORWARD!

LITTLE Mrs. Bell was pretty, witty, and lovable. These two last-named qualities are seldom compatible; for your wit is apt to forget, under temptation, that—

"As keenest edge by smoothest oil is whet,
So wit is by *politeness* sharpest set."

Witty people *will* make their point, if it is death to their dearest friend; but Mrs. Bell was a loving little creature, and would not harm anything or body by word or deed—except Croton bugs, in which all good housekeepers will applaud her.

She was impetuous because she was bright. She was apt to do things with a rush, taking virtue

and surrounding circumstances for granted, because she was innocent and unsuspecting. She was just a sweet, little, fascinating woman, continually getting into scrapes and miraculously escaping from the consequences by—how much? by barely the skin of her pretty white teeth—that's not genteel, but at least it is comprehensible.

Last winter, while head over ears in work for one of our charity fairs, Mrs. Bell received an invitation from a new acquaintance to a large party given to a bride. She wanted to go very much; she wanted to sell at her table at the fair very much; and she wanted a new dress very much, for she had worn all she had at least twice each, which argued a degree of destitution which is equivalent to a state of fashionable nudity.

Let a woman alone for managing! By making love to Madame D., an exquisite dress, all flounce and green wreath, was made—a pretty girl in the establishment, of Mrs. Bell's size, acting as dummy, so that it fitted to distracting perfection without the owner having to try it on.

She was to sell at the fair till it closed, at half past ten, then rush home, dress, and off to her party. Capital! what a gay little woman it was!

Talk of Mark Antony and his losing the world! *She* could have conquered him and his grandfather too in half the time. Any one else would have remained to this day on the thorns or horns (which-ever it is) of the dilemma.

The night of the party arrived. First, at the fair, the little woman kept a crowd around her, laughing and buying till their pockets were empty. At her side was a beautiful young girl, holding a great "grab bag," but who owed not a little of the unlimited demand upon her hidden wares to the bantering encouragement and mysterious hopes held out by her companion of the immense prize which might possibly be discovered by a persevering, oft-repeated search. She was protection as well as help to the pretty maiden; for, when a handsome, well-dressed, but, impudent young fellow, staring at her with his bold black eyes, inquired, "Have you sweethearts to sell?" Mrs. Bell, quickly, but quietly taking up a doll, answered for her, "Yes. Here is a sweetheart, and *here* is a puppy;" holding before his face a small hand glass. The puppy walked off, discomfited, with a gleeful ha! ha! and something else in his ear.

The evening brightened and waned, mid music,

jests, and excitement, and a few minutes after half past ten, Mrs. Bell hurried home, escorted by some friends, who lived in the neighborhood.

"Well, Fred," said she to her husband, as she removed her bonnet and cloak, and began to dress for the party; "well Fred, how's the headache? Can't you go with me?"

Fred called his head by an opprobrious epithet, vowed the pulses in his temples were beating his brains black and blue, but begged his little wife not to mind him, but for once to go alone.

"Oh dear, I can't!" she cried, "I don't want to go without you. What shall I do?"

"Do, you little goose? I advise you to go on lacing up those ridiculous little white satin boots. In the first place, I could not find half an inch of room in the carriage, with you and your crinoline; and that extraordinary flourish"—pointing to her dress, which lay on the bed, covering it all over, the innumerable flounces heaped up like a syllabub, "it would be death to crease it and destruction to sit upon it. I should have to follow you in another vehicle. You will be perfectly safe, as the same man will drive you that we have always employed. Don't mind me; I want you to go and enjoy your-

self. Here is my night key ; let yourself in, and I will go to bed."

Little Mrs. Bell, to oblige her husband, took his advice ; to be sure it coincided remarkably with her wishes, by which the wise reader perceives what is the only true way to give advice, and I hope thanks me for the hint.

So Fred helped her to dress ; and her maid accomplished the intricate lacing up of the flounced syllabub on her round, lithe figure with many a tap of the impatient little foot. Then she was rapturously admired and heartily kissed by her husband, with an " Oh Fred, *do* don't ! you are crushing my wreath ! " (Caresses are *so* frivolous and ill-timed, on solemn full-dress occasions.) Then she tripped into the nursery to bend for an instant over little " Pet," otherwise Georgiana, who lay in her crib, dimpling and cooing in her sleep ; then down stairs and into the carriage with such admirable strategy that not one furbelow was disturbed. She did not think it worth while to sit down, but did a little Zampilaerostation in the balancing line, for the space of five minutes, at the end of which time the carriage stopped with a jerk, which nearly pitched her over on the top of the precious wreath, opposite

a large brown stone house, one of a uniform row, in Twenty-third street, below Fifth avenue.

It was now nearly twelve o'clock. Mrs. Bell, without looking particularly about her, or waiting for the coachman to get down from his box, let herself out, ran up a long flight of steps, and rang the bell. When the door was opened, she did not stop for the stereotyped "Ladies, second floor front," but rushed up stairs, flew along the upper hall, quickly opened the door of the front room, and literally and figuratively flounced in.

"Ah!! aie!! aie!! e-e-e-e!!" shrieked a lady, starting up from a bed in which she was lying.

The d——l!" bawled a gentleman, in an inconsiderable Roman tunic, who was standing before a glass, violently brushing his hair with two brushes—right! left! right! left! but now held them aloft, transfixed with amazement.

"Ah! oh! murder!!" cried poor little Mrs. Bell. "Where am I? Oh-h-h!"

"In my house!" bellowed the gentleman, now sitting on a chair, vehemently dragging the tunic down over his knees.

"B-b-b-but," stammered Mrs. Bell, nailed to the

spot between confusion and terror, "don't Mrs. Newlady have a party to-night; and isn't this her house?"

"No! she lives next d-o-o-r!" cried the angry Roman; the last word ending with a roar, which made the poor little woman jump straight up and down, with a high squeak.

By this time the lady in the bed was in fits of hysterical laughter, her face hidden under the counterpane, and Mrs. Bell's obfuscated faculties had waked up sufficiently to enable her to mutter an apology, and carry her out of the room and the house, and up a flight of stone steps precisely like the first she had mounted.

When *this* door was opened, the band playing Mendelssohn's wedding march; the company crowding up stairs to supper; the flowers and perfumes of heliotrope and fried oysters, assured her that this time she was "all right." Throwing her white opera cloak upon her arm, she joined the throng, her little heart still beating tumultuously at the recollection of the extraordinary tableau next door, to which her unexpected advent had given such tremendous effect.

She ran into the dressing room, twisted and

twirled for a minute before an immense mirror; gave a little twitch to the wreath of feathery hyacinths which, growing on wire, retained all their pristine, make-believe, dewy freshness, and was soon telling her "awful mistake" to a group of friends, who nearly expired with laughter.

She had a "splendid time." Eat a little, danced a little, and flirted a great deal. Don't let fly your spiteful arrows at her, Miss Sneering! Wait till you hear my definition of flirting.

When the society of a bright, pretty woman, married if you will, is courted by a gentleman, who admires her hugely, but respectfully; enjoys her sparkling, quick repartees, listens with delight to her serious opinions put forth with grave sweetness, high-bred courtesy and almost childish frankness; and declares with the utmost enthusiasm, "by Jove!" and "by George!" that she is worth all the girls he ever saw, because at the same time, with ingenious but innocent wiles she causes him to believe that *he* says the bright things; whereupon he pulls up his collar, twirls his mustache, and thinks what a deuce of a fine fellow he is—that is what I call "flirting;" and innocent enough it is, *for it never gets one grain further.* So, Mr. Greeneye

Graspall, accept the reflected compliment upon the taste of your selection, and be thankful; invite young Appreciate to dinner; take wine with him, and have unbounded faith in your wife, for she deserves it; and Miss Snarling, don't trouble yourself to rush about in your bilious, dyspeptic condition from house to house, turning up the whites of your eyes, and ejaculating, "Isn't it awful how that woman flirts!"

On the other hand, when a woman, smart, artful as a fox, with sinister intention, coils herself round a silly young coxcomb, plies him with poetry, sighs, and flummery, murmurs in low, thrilling tones, all sorts of nonsense, mixed with blighted hopes, &c., *she* may call it flirting, but *I* call it *intrigue*.

Have I made myself understood? or have I, too, some cross, tattling old tabby, puckering up her face like a bag at me and my definitions?

Well, never mind! such women as Mrs. Bell live down stupid, malicious, ignorant, ill-natured, little-minded, contemptible people like Sneering and Co., all in good time—though they may gabble ugly things about them, twenty-one to the dozen.

There! I feel relieved, and will go back to our

little friend, who enjoyed herself heartily as I have told you ; and at half past two the next morning, allowed young Appreciate the felicity of helping her on with her opera cloak ; got into her carriage full of glee and excitement, and was driven home.

Home was in Fifth avenue above Thirtieth street, the middle house of a uniform block. She opened the carriage door, told the man there was no need to ring, as she had a latch key, and tripped quickly up the long flight of steps, while he drove rapidly off.

It was a moonless night, and the street lamps at the corners gave a dim, uncertain glimmer. So the little woman fumbled a long time with her key. It did not fit very well, or else the difficulty was because she had never used a latch key before. You see she did not belong to the New York or Union Club ; for whose members night keys are an indispensable institution. But at last the door opened ; and she sped through the dark hall, and up to her room on the second floor front.

She went in noiselessly, so as not to wake poor dear Fred. The room was dark, and the fire out. "Poor fellow," she thought, "the light hurt his head."



Allowed young Appreciate the felicity of helping her
on with her opera cloak.—p. 190.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

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Softly and slowly she found her way to the dressing bureau, between the windows, upon which she laid her fan, pocket handkerchief, and the key; then commenced a slow journey back to a little table near the door, leading into the nursery, where a box of matches was always kept.

But what is this?! She came suddenly against a piece of furniture she did not remember as standing in such a position, or indeed being in the room at all. She passed her hand over it. It seemed to be a very small bookcase, or perhaps only a desk. Perplexed, she stood for a moment, wondering if Fred had ordered it home, and it had come late at night after she left. A vague trembling seized her; she thought she would call her husband; but no, that would be cruel, to waken him out of his quiet, refreshing sleep, when he had been suffering so with headache. So she just crept to the bedside and gently touched his face. He seemed to be in a sweet, dreamless sleep, for he never stirred. The touch of the well-known curl on his forehead and the long silken mustache reassured her; and with a sigh of relief, smiling at her causeless fear, and murmuring "All right," she continued her search for the matches.

Ah! the little table at last! Mrs. Bell put her hand out with a confident flourish. It came with a slap against some porcelain object, which upset with a crash against another, and both clattered down upon the carpet in a general hullabaloo!!

"Ai! ai!! What the d——l's that?!" cried a strange voice from the bed.

Mrs. Bell froze perfectly stiff with terror immediately; and before she had time to scream.

"Wh-a-a-t's that?" said the voice again; this time as if the owner was in an ague fit. "Is—it—a—gh-o-s-t?"

My reader perceives that Mrs. Bell had distinguished herself for the second time in one evening—by rushing into the wrong house.

Coming slowly out of her almost death-trance of terror with a gasp and shudder, though still in extremity of conscious fright, she heard a dismal groaning a long way under the bedclothes. The man too, was in mortal fear—of—the ghost. One can fight a robber, and rather enjoy the fray, but dragons, hippogriffs, and above all, ghosts!!

She looked so like one as her white garments reflected the vague, shadowy light which the distant street lamps gave through the window panes

—her arms raised, lifting the opera cloak, which spread out like a wing on either side. Ghostly and ghastly enough!

Thank Heaven for the thought! “Doing ghost,” might save her! Like a flash of lightning came the recollection of her little Pet’s ridiculously correct personation of a character in a play which she had been taken in great grandeur and glory to see at Barnum’s Museum the Saturday before; and how with peals of laughter Fred and she had coaxed the chubby little thing, ten times a day, to strike an attitude, take a tragedy stride, and ejaculate in a deep, hollow voice, “I AM THE ANGEL OF DEATH!”

Mrs. Bell must go past the bed to recover the night key. Stilling her throbbing pulses with the determination of despair, the brave little woman commenced her high-tragedy stride, which consists of placing one foot at the greatest possible distance in advance of the other, and dragging the other up as if there was a fifty pound weight tied fast to it, and repeat at every step.

Three strides—and a deep, sepulchral voice sounded close to the bed, “I AM THE ANGEL OF DEATH.”

He clutched violently at the bedclothes, appalled by the grim phantom which his imagination, helped, as it appeared, by his conscience, pictured to him ; and in a kind of hysterical hurry he gibbered out—

“ Oh Lord ! O spare me ! I will repent ! I'll go to-morrow and give Sam Noddy his money ! I *did* sell his stocks in Wall street and keep half of the proceeds. I *did* draw the money placed in my care, out of one bank in gold ; sell the gold and deposit it in bills, in another, pocketing the difference ! I *did* cheat Fitznoodle a little at cards at the club the other night. Oh ! Oh ! I'll make it up to him and everybody ! I'll lead a new life ! I will ! I will indeed ! if you'll only let me live a little longer ! ”

Dead silence.

Mrs. Bell had grasped the pocket handkerchief and night key ; and was now preparing to go back. With almost superhuman courage she had turned and steadily recommenced her slow high-tragedy stride past the bed again. The man with a desperate hope that he had been mad or drunk or dreaming, still holding the bedclothes tight in one hand, had cautiously poked out his head, and was peeping

through the fingers of his other hand in a frenzy of fear at the awful apparition.

As she approached, he curled himself up into a ball, and squeaked out in a voice between colic and collapse, "Oh do—n't! I will repe—nt!"

But the relentless ghost moaned forth, "I AM THE ANGEL OF RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE!" which last awful announcement caused the victim to bring his cranium with a tremendous whack against the headboard, shoot his legs straight down to the bottom of the bed, and become so absorbed in the achieving of a succession of hideous squawks, that under cover of them Mrs. Bell got safely past him, out of the room, down the stairs, and out of the house, leaving the front door wide open.

She rushed breathlessly up the next flight of steps; the right ones this time; opened the door readily with the night key, though trembling in every limb; shut and locked it, and darted up the second floor front, where a cheerful fire was burning, the gas lighted, and her husband in bed indeed, but keeping awake to welcome her.

Down went the poor little soul on her knees by his side; and hiding her face on his breast, treated him to the most tremendous fit of hysterics on record!

You may well believe that it took no end of salvolatile, coaxings and kissings, before little Mrs. Bell could utter an articulate word. It was such a mixture of sobs, sighs, and syllables, that it might as well have been heathen Greek for all he could make of it. But the comedy and tragedy came out at last, and roars of laughter from Fred, mixed with grateful ejaculations and thanks to the Power which had watched over his heedless little wife, in what might have been her deadly peril, subdued the hysterics to a few quiet, thankful tears, trembling smiles and sighs of comfort from the poor little heart.

Pet was pulled out of her crib, and kissed and hugged awake, laughing and dimpling all over at the joke, whatever it was. Then she was coaxed to do "the Angel of Death," in her funny, baggy little night drawers, and was informed that she was her mother's "Preserver," which mysterious epithet she concluded meant all the same as "Pet," and received accordingly with an immense number of chuckles and leaps, and immediately volunteered half a dozen repetitions of her ghostly *rôle*; every one finished off with three small kicks in the air, and a rollicking, musical little burst of baby laughter, which

made the whole thing so excessively comic that Mrs. Bell's third entertainment quite transcended the other two; and you may bet your life that Pet's tableau was far more to her mind than the gentleman's in the very short Roman tunic or the gentleman's in the very tall ghost fright.

She had left her fan behind her; but it is needless to say that she never sent for it. The gentleman who made his ghost such dangerous confessions has it now, and it renders him monstrously uncomfortable. He swears at it. The sight of it fills him with fury. He would give four times the money he cheated Sam Noddy out of, if he could discover to whom it belonged. He is afraid to inquire. It is an inscrutable mystery to him, for he boards in a house exclusively for gentlemen. Mrs. Bell, however, has found *him* out; for of course she planted herself the next morning after her exploits, at one of the front parlor windows, the blinds closed, save just an atom of an aperture, and not a soul came out of the next door that she did not scan with anxious eyes. One came at last, slowly stepping, looking up and down in a worried manner, with—"Good Heavens!" the same round curl on his forehead that Fred had, only jet black, while Fred's

was light brown, and twisting spitefully a long silken jet-black mustache! Another look! and—"Good Heavens" again! (*she* makes these exclamations;) it is the "puppy" who was impudent to the pretty maiden at the fair. No wonder he was a coward! and afraid of ghosts! Such heroes always insult timid women, and are utterly put to the rout by brave ones; not to speak of a spook, striding at him in the dead of night, to fly away with him, soul and body.

Our impudent, cowardly, fashionable hero, since his terrible fright, never imagines that one of his fashionable lady friends looks at him at all particularly, without the hair rising up on his fashionable head, and the joints at his knees getting loose and shaky; then he goes home and swears in impotent rage at the fan, and wishes the d——l would fly away with the woman who owned it.

Fred has had an old, but useful proverb handsomely engrossed in large capitals, surrounded with miraculous flourishes, and prettily framed and glazed. It hangs in his house over the mantelpiece of the second floor front, and reads thus:

BE SURE YOU'RE RIGHT—THEN FORWARD!!

“Forward!” repeated Mrs. Wilton, imitating the high-tragedy stride, “I am once more *the Angel of retributive Justice*,” and she fell upon her laughing husband with such a shower of little innocent poundings from those two small white snowballs, with which she had threatened him the week before, that we all laughed till we cried, and never went to the rescue.

So it was all true! and much did we aggravate the pseudo ghost by gravely desiring to know how she had lived through it all! begging her husband to tell us some more of her adventures; for we were certain that she had had scores, just as comical and tragical; whereupon, in spite of her doing her utmost to prevent him, he told us that only the day before he had gone into a store with her to look at some stereoscopic pictures; that a very handsome man, whom they knew only by sight, was standing near the same counter; and that he (Mr. W.) had moved away, while his wife was absorbedly gazing at one of the pictures. Then she deliberately edged herself nearer the very handsome man, still looking at the picture, placed her hand on his arm, pressed it, and softly said, “Dear Fred, is not that gentleman the handsome Mr. Rubelle?”

Of course she got no answer ; and looking up with a jump and a little scream, saw that she had been telling Mr. Rubelle himself how handsome he was. "She keeps me very busy," he continued, with a mock sigh, "making apologies of all sorts and sizes, and getting her out of sudden and unexpected difficulties."

Sweet cousin Adelaide never could bear to see any one teased : so she glided round to Mrs. Wilton, curled her arm about her waist, and murmured with her sweet song-voice in her ear, "Never mind, dear, your always *mean* right." This seemed a simple remark enough ; but if you could have seen her charming face as she spoke, beaming charity, which is love, in its broadest, purest sense, you would at once have understood the superlative comfort Mrs. Wilton found in the young girl's words, and highly applauded the cordial kiss given in return.

The next moment these two had made the wretch, Wilton, get down on his knees—they standing over him, terrible and beautiful, their eyes flaming wrath, their forms dilating with majestic indignation—and confess his ineffable baseness in making an amusing story out of his wife's

sufferings: to which confession, irresistibly ludicrous to the rest of us, they listened with a lofty deprecating air, until he began to sob, with the half of his face nearest to them buried in his pocket handkerchief, the other half making absurd faces at us—then, fearing for their gravity, they grandly forgave him on condition that he would never do so any more “'pon honor!”

As to young Appreciate, he would gladly have exchanged places with Mr. Wilton, and would never have risen from their feet until he had obtained not only their gracious pardon, but the additional boon from one of them of her most precious love.

The little wife hastened to order in the chocolate and sandwiches after all this excitement, as Mr. Wilton declared himself faint, and very much bruised bodily, by the dreadful pummelling he had received.

How like children we all acted that evening! I verily believe the men would have enjoyed a game at leap-frog, and we women would have accepted plums and tarts out of their pockets, as we did from our boy lovers, when we were eight and ten years old. Who could help being happy with three such

darling blooms of women, as the little wife, Mrs. Wilton, and cousin Adelaide! Of course poor old I must be left out; but I could look at the rest, thank Heaven! without envy. Even the "old fossil" had plenty of sunshine remaining in his heart, in proof of which, I solemnly aver that he did not turn up his nose once at anybody or anything after the refreshments came in.

I walked close behind young Appreciate that evening as he waited upon cousin Adelaide home, which devoted attention had got to be a regular thing, I own I meanly listened, and heard him earnestly expatiating on what a seventh heaven, the true love of one he dared not mention would be to a lonely, motherless fellow; and how he longed to give all the devotion of his heart to this pure and lovely creature, for whom no language had sufficient wealth of words to adequately describe her perfections. She was one for whom he would sacrifice his life's happiness to save her from an hour's suffering.

And plenty more of the same. Take courage, Appreciate! Her eyes were bright as you spoke with two great heart jewels—tears of joy. It is

true she did not answer a word, perhaps that was because she could not. Never you mind! already in your hand is the key of that heart, "so innocent-arch, so cunning-simple."

CHAPTER X.

THE streets were white with snow. Sleety rain, mingled with great feathery flakes, still fell; the first, in long slanting lines, the others dancing in the wind as it roared, sobbed, and moaned in fitful changes.

But we were all at our pleasant rendezvous, bringing in the wild wind and plenty of snowflakes as the little wife's hospitable door was opened.

"Rare and true friends!" exclaimed Harry, shaking hands vigorously all round, while his wife pressed her warm rosy lips to our chilled cheeks—take care! I mean to Mrs. Wilton's, cousin Adelaide's, and mine. "Rare and true friends, to come wading through the storm! I have found out one of the 'hidden uses' of the winter's frost. Verily it causeth the fire of friendship to grow brighter and warmer. As I heard the hail beating against the windows like the tap, tap, tapping of a

bird of ill omen, I said you would not come. I doubted, because *I* was unworthy. Welcome all of you!"

"Ugh!" growled Mr. Growler, "the tip of my nose is frozen."

"Dear me! what a calamity! said Mrs. Wilton. "I'm sure if you ask her in your own irresistible way, cousin Adelaide will knit you a little red woollen bag to tie it up in. It would be such a pity to lose it!"

"Did you ever in your childhood, ma'am, go to a school where the punishment for foolish talking was to cut a slit in a long piece of whalebone, and insert therein the tip of the offending tongue?"

"Why, no!" answered Mrs. Wilton, looking innocent, "did *you*?"

"Don't mind Uncle Growler, dear Mrs. Wilton," cried young Appreciate, "don't you see the dimple in his chin? that is an infallible index of a tender and most loving heart."—I may as well mention here that Appreciate had a magnificent dimple in *his* chin, and this may account for the fact that while Mrs. Wilton looked sceptical upon the cleft-chin argument, cousin Adelaide, blushing like a rose, said it was quite an astonishing coincidence.

A sudden gust of frozen rain, rattling like shot against the window panes, caused us all to draw nearer the cheery soft coal fire, with a feeling of delicious comfort.

“I thought to have had my translation of the ‘Marble Bust’ ready by this evening,” said Harry; “but the fact is, one evening during the past week I had to make a kite for my nephew and namesake, who danced round the room, yelling with impatience till it was done. The next evening he came again, and introduced his particular friend Phil, a great lubberly lolipop-eating urchin, and insisted that I should make *him* one also, instanter, as his (Harry’s) kite had gone up into the empyrean in such ‘slap-up’ style, as to cause his stay upon earth, while he held the other end of the string, to be a succession of frantic struggles, ecstatic capers, and sudden, violent bounces in the air. ‘Why, uncle Harry,’ he bawled, ‘I had to get the coachman to wind her up for me. She’s a *satirical* kite, I tell you!! and Phil wants one just like her.’ No use saying ‘no’ to such customers, so I made the kite, with both boys upsetting their chairs every five minutes by starting up, as if there had been gunpowder fired off underneath them, to

look over my shoulder to see if I was 'most done'—and my little wife looking on, laughing at all three of us, declaring it was 'so lovely' to see boys so happy. Lovely, indeed! My little rosebud Carrie is worth a million of them!"

"Darling!" ejaculated the little wife, with beaming eyes.

"Which?" inquired Harry; "Carrie or I?"

"Divide it between you," she answered, blushing and smiling. "Now let's have some serious conversation this evening."

"W-h-e-u-g-h," whistled Mr. Growler. "Have you a gun in the house, Harry, to 'shoot folly?'"

"Meaning me, dear sir?" asked Mrs. Wilton, with a dainty little courtesy, a smiling mouth, but an ominous eye-flash. Then, something strange happened; her lip trembled, the fire went out of her eyes, and two great tears rose up and reproached him.

Oh then! the dimple, that infallible outward sign of a tender heart, nobly asserted itself. Mr. Growler arose hastily, his face flushing, took her hand, and said in a marvellously soft voice for him, "Don't mind an old crosspatch, my dear, don't you know even the devil is not as black as he's

painted. You'll really make me miserable if you ever pay the slightest attention to my growling again. I don't mean it for you, or anybody in particular ; it's chronic ; I should snarl at you all the same if you were a saint, which you are not, or an angel, which you are, for I see you are going to kiss and make up, instead of flying at me like a royal Bengal tigress, as I deserve," and he actually bent down his gray head and kissed her cheek. Cunning old Growler !

Pretty Mrs. Wilton at this turned her head half away, but held out her hand with a bright smile, and the soft warm grasp of the little white fingers told him peace was restored. Generous little woman ! I said in the beginning of this veracious history that she was a vixen. I told a fib. She is the cream of tartar, covered with sweetness.

The rain seemed to increase, and the wind howled venomously. I had put a manuscript in my pocket, ready for emergencies. The circumstances mentioned in it seemed peculiarly apropos to this night of snow and frost, so I said, by way of introduction, "Do you remember, dear, my husband's handsome cousin Miranda ?"

"Certainly," answered the little wife. "Who

could forget such a noble-looking, lovely old lady ? The evening Harry and I dined with her at your house was rendered delightful by her original and bright sayings."

"Yes," said Harry, "she is a glorious old lady, with her large warm heart looking straight out of her beautiful eyes. I own I fell violently in love with her, and asked her to adopt me."

"And what did she answer?" I asked.

"She said she rather guessed I was under pretty good training already, and she calculated one thumb was quite enough to be under at a time. When my wife complained I was getting beyond her, she'd take me in hand."

"And I'll warrant you would be brought up in the way you should go, then, if ever, to a mathematical certainty. And now about this story. She told me the first evening she came, of a girl's frolic of her's, which made a strong impression upon me; doubtless half of it was owing to the sparkling, vivid manner with which she always speaks. Bless her kind heart! Even at table, if you only request her to hand you the salt, her "*certainly* I will," is said in such a heartfelt way, that you can't help feeling more than commonly

thankful. She keeps me in a glow of affection for her every moment she is with me. She cheers, comforts, and advises me. In spite of her plain, homely words, many grave men are glad to ask her advice and abide by it. Her keen perception and rare common sense come by nature; and thus it is, that beneath that Yankee dialect, all she utters is to the point and *from the point*; to the purpose and *from the purpose*."

"Is she a widow?" asked Mr. Growler, gravely.

"This many a year," I answered.

"If your story comes up to your description, I shall propose," said Mr. Growler.

At this we all burst out laughing, and were immensely amused, when sweet cousin Adelaide crept like a little mouse close to him, and putting the palms of her hands together, pleaded, "I thought you meant to ask me, sir?"

"So I do, saucebox!" he said, ~~catching~~ catching her hands, and holding her fast; "so I do, not for myself, but for one of my family."

Bushels of roses!! how the blushes came at that! pouring in a lovely crimson tide over face and neck, and down to her pretty finger tips. She

struggled to get away ; and young Appreciate darted to hand her a chair and seat himself beside her. I do verily believe if his uncle had asked him then and there to go to the moon and fetch him from thence a pound of green cheese, he could -and would have done it ! “ What a darling old uncle it was, to be sure ! What an angelic young girl ! The very air vibrated with joy.

“ Quite time,” quoth I to myself, “ for common sense and cousin Miranda.” So I took them out of my pocket, and calling “ attention ! ” in such a peremptory tone that it brought young Appreciate back from elysium, I began :

COUSIN MIRANDA.

I was sitting by my fireside one winter's afternoon ; my half-dreaming thoughts radiating like a star, earthward to the many disappointments and few joys of the past, and Godward, I humbly trust, with prayerful resolutions to do His work better in the future.

Two of my children were with me ; they were girls ; but none the less “ my jewels ; ” for Adelaide, the elder, in all her sweet fifteen years had never given me one disrespectful word ; and Alice, “ little

Allie," though a spitfire, a perfect little tornado of fury and passion, on the least occasion, had a trick, when her rage was over, of looking out of her large dark gray eyes with so pleading a "forgive me" that it was no manner of use to try to resist her bewitchments; and, sooth to say, I never did try, but simply loved her to her hurt, soul and body.

Her nose was nothing particular; her saucy mouth had a wry twist, comical enough, and her little skimpy wig was of an underdone brown; but those eyes! they always did the business! and I would clutch her and kiss her till she screamed with pain, and never a word about her badness. Heaven forgive me! I couldn't help it.

Well, we three were sitting quite still. Adelaide, as you know, is naturally a thoughtful girl, and Alice makes believe once in a while. The gorgeous red light of the sun's last rays was fast fading, when there came a quick knock at the door.

I felt annoyed at the interruption, and gave permission to enter in a grumbling, sleepy voice. Upon this something breezy and cheery seemed to fill the room. I felt myself kissed heartily on both cheeks; then Adelaide and Alice, and then I saw it

was cousin Miranda from Connecticut, who had evidently come to make me a visit, carpet bag, new cap, knitting and all.

How handsome she was! With her sixty-five years resting so lightly on her smooth brow and shapely shoulders, she could fitly have represented a noble Roman matron, saved from the ruined past, to show us how grand women looked in those days. Far above the ordinary standard height, cousin Miranda was as graceful as every little woman *ought* to be, and few very tall women ever *are*. Her beautiful wavy brown hair *would* curl, all she could do, in great smooth rings on either side of her face; and her hazel eyes were so inwardly luminous, it seemed highly probable that when a girl, she had coaxed away two of his brightest beams from the sun, and held them prisoned ever since.

Cousin Miranda talked Yankee fashion; but, bless your heart! that was the best of it.

"Well," said she, taking off her cloak and bonnet, and throwing them on the bed in her quick, smart way; and whipping her knitting out of her pocket, and beginning to knit as if the stocking had got to be finished right out of hand. (So it had! it was

for the soldiers.) "Well, I don't see but you're about as good and pretty all on you, as ever."

"And *you* are perfectly splendid," I returned, feeling quite heavenly-minded again, "and I am right glad to see you."

So I was.—Under affidavit.

"I *knew* you would be," she answered, in her honest, cheery way, "so I thought I'd come and stay a spell with you, before I went home to Litchfield. I have been here some weeks over to Brooklyn staying with my daughter, who has just the nicest husband, and dearest, cutest children I ever see. I've enjoyed my visit wonderful, 'specially Sabbath days. I like all the meetin' houses, and all the preachin'."

"Did you go to all in turn?"

"Why, yes. You see in the morning I went with my daughter to hear the Rev. Mr. Littlejohn. They're pretty high strung there; and I never know where in the world to look for the place in the prayer book. Couldn't follow the singing neither; 'taint nothing like 'China,' or 'Haddam,' and those nice old Connecticut tunes; but most all chantin', as they call it. But this don't make no sort of difference in the edifying of it, if you feel right;

because the pasture is in real earnest, and preaches from his innermost heart. He lifts me up wonderful, and I'm glad I've set under his preachin'. But I declare for't! I *was* took aback one morning, when I saw our little Willie, not only bowing e'en-a-most double at the creed, but a-crossing himself just like the Romans! That was clean past me! and I put a stop to it pretty quick; I can't conceive, no-how, where he learned such a thing, though he is a most curious smart little chap, and picks up all sorts of queer sayin's and doin's.

“Then in the afternoon I went to hear Mr. Van Dam—I mean Mr. Van Dyke, who writ the sermon about how glorious 'twas for us to be free, and livin' in the Land of Liberty, and how beautiful 'twas for the colored folks to be slaves. Mr. Van Dyke is a white man, so I reckon he can't calkilate for the colored folk's side, as fair as he can for his'n. If there could be a turn about, and he was a slave, I'd like to know what kind of a sermon he'd write *then*. That's all!

“But the very best time of all is the evening. Then I go to hear Ward Beecher. Last Sabbath night he preached about Charity; gave it to them right smart; said some of them were real stingy,

and wanted a sight of stirrin' up. 'Now,' says he, 'you old fellows in front, I see very well by the cast of your expressions, that you're feelin' mighty good, and like as not saying to yourselves—"My sakes! ain't he givin' it all killin' sharp to those rich old curmudgeons a few seats back." You think so, do you? Well you just turn round and look a few seats back, and you'll see that those very chaps are puckering up their mouths and grinning, to hear what a fine shakin' down *you're* havin'.'* Oh I do like to hear him hold forth! if any sinner can hear *him* without comin' to a realizing sense, I'll give it up! that's all!"

"Why, cousin Miranda! What a good woman you are, to go to church three times a day!"

"Yes I *am* good," she laughed, "but you see it takes three ministers to keep me so. Mr. Beecher does most of all. I only wish he'd had the settlin' of the old deacon who traded horses down in Vermont."

"Why, what did *he* do? cousin Miranda."

"Well, you see, Deacon Jabe Sniffin thought he'd experienced a change of heart; but he didn't want to experience a change of business; *that was* touchin' a tender pint; might interfere with the

* A fact, somewhat differently worded.

profits ; so he thought he'd consult with Deacon Aminidab Tweedle, who kept store, and fixed the sugar over night.

“ ‘ Now look here ; you don't s'pose, brother Tweedle ' he began, ' you don't s'pose them little stories—sort-o'-lies like—that you and I tell in the way of trade, will be reckoned agin us, in the Day o' Judgment ? Sarcumstanced as we are, we carn't help it, you know ; *I* don't s'pose it makes no sort o' difference in the sight of the Lord, long's the *heart's* all right ; now does it, brother Tweedle ? ’ ”

We laughed heartily at this anecdote, enhanced as it was by the gleams of fun that came sparkling through the crystalline clearness of cousin Miranda's handsome eyes ; and then I said with a latent intention of coaxing another story from her, perhaps some adventure of her girlhood, “ What a real old-fashioned snow storm we've had ; the sleighing must have been nearly as good as it was in your young days. I suppose you had no end of sleighing frolics then ? ”

“ Well, yes, ” she answered, while some memory of the past, caused the color to deepen on her cheek, which, even at her age, was rose-tinted and waxen in texture (for cousin Miranda is none of your sal-

low, saleratus-poisoned country women), "Well, I've more 'n half a mind to tell you what came of a famous sleigh ride I had once."

"Oh, do! do!" we all chimed; and spread ourselves out, skirtwise and brainwise, to enjoy it the better.

The bright blue knitting needles clinked and twinkled in the firelight, as she straightened herself up the twentieth part of an inch more than she was before (for let me tell you, of arm chairs and rocking chairs she would none, but always sat up grand and stately, the handsome old dame!) and then she began:

"Well, one bright morning I got a letter from uncle ——, your husband's father, dear, inviting me over for a visit. He couldn't come after me himself, he wrote, but Squire Mead, who brought the letter, was the first deacon in his meetin' house, and awful smart in settin' things to rights; and had quite a gift at leadin' on lectur evenjngs—and he guessed—uncle did—that the squire could take one young gal a journey of eighteen miles safe enough, if he was spry about it.

"'Land-o'-Nod!' I thought, 'I guess I can take care of myself most times.' Well, mother said I

might go ; and I ran up chamber and fixed myself right smart ; and didn't forget to put in my trunk the book muslin gown I'd worn at Lucindy Peck's apple paring, and Clarrissy Bush's quilting frolic, none the worse for them ; and then Squire Mead tucked me up in the buffalo, and mother put a hot brick to my feet, and we started for our winter's ride.

“ At first I was kinder nervous and silly ; and I guess the Squire, with all his leadin' of lectur meet-ins', felt skeery, and din't know how to begin the talk ; so I put in, 'Havin' pretty good times down to your place, I shouldn't wonder ?' ”

“ ‘ Oh my, yes ! I guess so, ’ he answered, quite relieved, ‘ I wish to goodness Miss Briggs you'd a-come last week. You see trade's rayther dull now, and we've gone and got up a grand sleighing party for to-morrow, twenty-five couple ! all in one-horse cutters ! and coming home in the moonlight. Consarn it ! ’ he continued, looking awful worried, ‘ there aint a young man left ! I'm a mind to hev out the two-horse sleigh, and take you myself, long with my wife. ’ ”

“ Did you ever ! I stiffened up and said, ‘ I calkilated I'd about as many sleigh rides as I wanted

to home, and I didn't care nothin' at all in the world about going; shouldn't know none of the folks, and I hoped for the land's sake he'd make no change for *me*.'

"By this time we'd got to the half-way house, for the Squire drove like Jehu. We stepped out of the sleigh and I went into the livin' room to warm myself. Sittin' by the fire was as likely lookin' a young man as ever I see. He rose up and made me such a beautiful genteel bow! you've no idee! and just then Squire Mead comin' in, he rushed up to him and the Squire cried out, 'Why lawful sakes! Seth Lee, I declare on't! When *did* you git back from South Ameriky?'

"'Just come, Squire.'

"'No! How do you do?'

"'First-rate.'

"'Du tell! Well! This is Miss Briggs.'" Upon that he made me another beautiful bow; and I had concluded that he was Deacon Lee's only son, I had heard tell on, who had gone away to seek his fortune. Deacon Lee kept the half-way house, you see; and that was how Seth came to be settin' there so comfortable.

"'Well,' said Squire Mead, 'I s'pose you



THE HALF-WAY HOUSE.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

wouldn't care to jine our sleighing party to-morrow and have Miss Briggs for your pardner ?'

" 'Oh yes,' he answered, looking at me, and speaking up quickly ; 'it would make me extremely happy if Miss Briggs would honor me so fur.'

" This, you see, was his travelled way of speaking, and I declare for't, it sounded beautiful ! So I said, ' Well, if you don't mind riding nine miles before daylight to git me, and will be to uncle's by half-past seven, I'm agreeable.'

" 'I shouldn't think nothing of twice nine miles,' said he.

" Well I never ! I turned as red as a beet at that I know, and hurried out to the sleigh ; but he *would* help me in ; and he *would* wrap me up in the buffalo ; and he *would* run in and get the hot brick, and fix it very particularly square under my feet ; and I wished him to Guinea, that's a fact ! "

" But why, cousin Miranda ? "

" Because I was sure Squire Mead would plague me all the rest of the way ; and so he did, advising me to give the mitten to my last beau and keep company with Seth Lee. He was real aggravatin' !

" At last we got to uncle's, and he came to the

gate to help me out, kissing me and saying, 'Well, Mirandy, I don't see as you've been pining. Your cheeks are as red as roses, and your eyes bright as new buttons; but good land! you're way behind the lighthouse this time. Seems to me, when the sky rains porridge your plate's always upside down,' and then he began to tease me about the grand sleigh ride that was to come off, and wish to goodness he was a young man for my sake!

"'Oh, now don't you bother, uncle!' said I; 'Maybe I know—ahem! Come now! I'll bet all the loose change in my pocket against a new gown from you, *that I lead the party to-morrow morning.*'

"'Land o' Liberty! how *can* you,' cried uncle, 'when there ain't a horse nor a cutter, nor a young man left in the hull village.'

"'Never you mind,' said I, 'only have the gown ready; I shouldn't object to a laylock ribbon with it.'

"So I slipped round, and set the table and made the tea, and helped aunt all I could; and then I went up stairs and unpacked my trunk, and took out the book muslin gown and trimmed it up real fine, with some blue ribbons (and it set like a dandy, I can tell you!) and when uncle came up to

see why on earth I stayed away so long, I just showed it to him, and set him laughing like all possessed, to see how I kept up the joke about going—I looking as innocent all the time, as a two-week-old lamb.

“After tea we set round talkin’ over all the folks; and then we had some nuts and cider, and pretty soon I lighted my candle to go to bed. Uncle couldn’t help poking a little more fun at me—he was a mortal tease—so he said, ‘I’m awful sorry, Mirandy, you’ve been a-doin’ such a numerous number of things, all for nothin’—it’s too bad! but then you needn’t be noways perticler about getting up early in the mornin’, as there’ll be no cutter at the gate.’

“‘S’pose *you* get up early to make sure of it,’ I said, laughing, as I ran up stairs.

“I was stirring bright and early, or rather dark and early the next morning, for the sun was still sleeping. I heard uncle raking out the ashes in the room below; and I laughed as I dressed to think that *my* time for poking fun was nearly come—the—dear me, had come! for I heard that moment the bells ringing out a sweet little jubilate in the cold, clear air; and running to the window, I saw just

the cutest little cutter at the gate, the first beams of the sun shining on it ; and giving a pretty faint rose-color to the snow, which lay upon hill and valley, and made all the land look like a great billowy white ocean."

(Cousin Miranda was really poetical here.)

"Out jumped Seth Lee, as spry as a squirrel; and down stairs I flew, for I was all ready with the book muslin gown and blue ribbons, well covered up with a great cloak ; tapped uncle on the shoulder as he stood at the door with his mouth so wide open with astonishment that he couldn't get a word out, and said, 'Don't forget an extra yard or so when you trade for that gown, I'm a pretty t-a-l-l girl, more ways 'n one, don't you think,' jumped into the sleigh, and was off.

"And I DID lead the party. I had a grand day, for my partner was just as polite as ever he could be ; and when we got to the first stopping place, which was a great iron foundery we were to examine, the whole party were all but crazy with fun ; and Seth helped it on wonderful.

"He got the foundery men to make me a little iron spider, and all the rest of the gals got all sorts of little housekeepin' things giv to them ; and then

we jumped into the cutters again, and raced off; I leading as before, to the tavern where we had ordered the dinner and old uncle Pete, the black fiddler.

“Such a dinner! my sakes! most equal to Thanksgiving day! turkey and cranberries; turnip sass and potatoes; chicken pie and other beverages; pickled tongue, pumpkin pudding, pound cake, pork and beans, and ever so much more; and the cider went fluctuatin round *considerable*.

“After dinner uncle Pete struck up some lively dancing tunes, and let into em' in such real earnest, that we all put to and danced—*didn't* we dance! Somehow Mr. Lee thought he had a sort o' right to me; I don't s'pose but what he had; so he danced with me pretty much all the time. I tried 'mazin hard to tire him out; but he was a first rate dancer, and no mistake.

“Then we played ‘*Hunt the key,*’ and ‘*Blind man's buff,*’ nearly laughing ourselves into connip-tions, till it became dark, and the great splendid moon rose; and then we bundled on our cloaks and jumped into the cutters like mad, *we* leading again; and Mr. Lee saying a power of pretty things to me, to all of which I answered, ‘*Nonsense! how you talk! du!*’

“ All of a sudden I kinder thought I felt an arm that didn't 'xactly belong to me, round on my side of the cutter ; the horse took to goin' sideways ; and before Mr. Lee knew what the critter was about, up he sidled against the fence ; the cutter made a clean turn oyer, dumped us out in the snow, and came down bang on top of us like a vegetable dish cover.

“ Well, I wasn't hurt a mite, but I lay perfectly still while Mr. Lee floundered out, feeling flat enough, *I* know. He turned the cutter over, and said in a low, trembling voice, ‘ Oh, Miss Briggs, are you hurt ? ’

“ ‘ I'm so as I'm alive, ’ I answered as weak as water. You'd 'a been surprised to see how quick he caught me up at that, and whipped me back into the cutter before any of the others came in sight—no small heft, I can tell you ! Then he began begging my pardon ; and wishing he was to Jerusalem before he had got me hurt. I told him in a feeble, die-away voice, that I would forgive him on condition that he kept his arm on his own side of the cutter for the rest of the ride ; and then I couldn't help laughing, which brightened him up so that I could plainly see the joyful sparkle of his eyes in the moonlight. He begged ~~to~~ call on me ;

but I told him I thought it wouldn't pay, as I was only going to stay two weeks, and he'd have to ride nine miles. To tell the truth I had been keepin' company for six months back with 'Lijah Peck down to our place, and I *rayther* thought it wouldn't do.

"But, dear sirs! who should come driving up next Sabbath evening but Seth Lee, looking as nice as a fresh pot of butter. I was provoked enough; for I knew uncle would begin teasin' me soon's ever he went, to make up for the bet he lost (pretty, green plaid gingham 'twas), so I kinder held back and said, 'Oh, Mr. Lee, is that you?'

"'Yes,' says he, 'and I can't flatter myself you are very glad to see me.' He had held out his hands to shake mine; but now he made believe he was coming forward to warm them at the fire.

"'Well I never!' said I. 'S'pose you sit down;' and then I sat down too as prim as a peapod, took out my knitting, and stuck to it stiddy; * for I'd no idee of givin' uncle a chance to make any more fun of me. I didn't care a snap for Mr. Lee, that's a fact! but he was no end of polite, and kept

* In old times in New England, the Sabbath began at sundown on Saturday, and ended at the same time on Sunday, and everybody worked or frolicked on Sunday evening.

looking, and talking to me, spite of my huffing him ; and, would you believe it ? invited me to a concert with him the next Wednesday evening.

“ ’Twarn’t no use to say ‘ no ; ’ so I said ‘ yes,’ for there uncle sat, as solemn as a deacon, waiting to plague me soon’s ever he’d gone. I had a pretty good spell of it, I rather guess ; but I went to the concert, and had a real nice time ; and Mr. Les came again before the two weeks were over ; and when I did go home, there he was at the half-way house, *of* course ; and this time he was very particler indeed helping me into the sleigh, while uncle was talking with his father, and saying in a quick way, ‘ Miss Briggs, I’m going next week, with fourteen other young men, to settle Rochester in York State. It will be two years before I can come back ; do you think you could like me well enough to wait for me, and accept me for your pardner ? I shall then, God willing, have a good home, and the same honest, loving heart I offer to you now.’ ”

“ Well, the dear me ! I felt flurried enough, but I managed to say I didn’t think I liked him well enough to make any promises.

“ ‘ May I write t^o you, then ? ’ said he, his voice trembling, and his face pale and solemn.

“ ‘Well,’ said I, ‘twon’t be much use, but if you want to very much I’ve no particler objection.’

“ ‘Will you answer my letters?’ said he.

“ Just then uncle came alongside, and off we went ; and when I got home I didn’t know whether I was glad or sorry.

“ But, somehow, I didn’t relish having ’Lijah Peck round after this, ’specially as he blew me up sky high for keeping company with another fellow. *He’d* heard of my doin’s, and warn’t goin’ to stand it no how ! *He* knew all about the grand sleighing party ; need’t tell *him* !

“ Upon that I got in a huff, and just gave him the mitten, and, my grief ! he went off short meter ! mad as forty !

“ Well, you see, the post office wasn’t the thing it is now-a-days, and the mail only went to Rochester once in four weeks, as it was a new settlement ; but at the end of that time I got a letter, and in four weeks more another, and so on, till I had seven in my drawer.”

“ Of course you answered them, cousin Miranda. didn’t you ? ” I asked.

“ Not one ! ” she answered, laughing. “ You see, he wrote such all killin’ fine things, full of poetry

and that, it made me afraid to answer him, so I just let it alone. But one day father came up to me, just as I'd got through baking, with another letter, and such a wonderful solemn face, I knew I was going to catch it. Says he—

“ ‘Mirandy, are you triflin' with that ere young man's feelin's ?’

“ ‘For pity's sake, I don't know,’ I said.

“ ‘Do you answer his letters ?’

“ ‘Well, good land ! I rayther guess I don't.’

“ ‘You don't ! Well, I'm beat ! You just go up stairs and answer this immediate ! He's a very fine young man, and I'm not a goin' to have you flirtin' round this way no longer.’”

“I didn't dare to disobey ; so I answered the letter the best I knew how ; and after that, Mr. Lee and I kept it up pretty stiddy a year longer ; and then he came back, looking so handsome, and rich in money and lands, and asked me once more to be his wife.’

“I said ‘No,’ and felt bad enough when he reproached me ; but 'twarn't no use talking. *I couldn't be his wife, for I didn't love him enough ;* and I just told him so, and begged him to forget me, and let me help him to find a better wife than I

would make. You see I had a friend, a wonderful nice gal; her name was Phoebe Ann Pemberton; and I thought I'd try and see if I couldn't make a match of it. So I begged him to forgive me all the pain I'd caused him, and think no more of me, but come next Sabbath evening to tea just the same. He had to say yes; he couldn't help it; and I saw he was hoping to change my mind; but I took mighty good care to have Phoebe Ann there, with her soft ways, pink cheeks, hazel eyes, and hair the color of a ripe chesnut. Of course I didn't let on a word to either; but they took to each other wonderful, and—would you believe it? six weeks after that they were married!”

Here cousin Miranda saddened all at once. A fluttering sigh escaped her lips, and then for a moment the room was as still as death. I wondered to myself if she had mistaken her feelings there and then, and had heedlessly thrown away her happiness. Presently she roused herself and went on.

“ Well, five years after that, the man I *was* to marry came along. He was nearly as poor as poor could be; and father and mother didn't relish the match, or like him any too well; but I *loved* him, and he was very kind to me; and I don't think

there was a happier woman, little or big, in our town, till I lost him."

Here there was another saddening of the handsome face, and a long pause.

"Did you ever see Mr. Lee again?" I asked.

"Why, Land o' Liberty! How strange things come about! Five years ago last summer, just after I lost my husband, I was sitting by the window one moonlight evening, feeling lonesome enough. The laylocks were in full bloom, and their sweet breath came in to me upon the soft summer wind; but strange enough, I was thinking of the winter time, and of that very sleighing party more'n forty years ago, when some one walked up the path and knocked at the door.

"I don't know why I felt nervous and flurried; but I certainly did when I opened the door, and there stood a fine looking old gentleman with white hair. Raising his hat with a bow as grand as if I was the queen, he said, 'Be you Miss Briggs, that was?' 'I calkilate you're right,' said I, 'Who be you?'

"'Only Seth Lee,' he said.

"'The Land alive! Mr. Lee!' I cried, 'how do you do?' and, old woman as I was, my heart jumped

right into my throat, and that was all I said. But he knew he was welcome, I'll be bound; and he came in and sat down, and we had such a grand long talk!

“I do say for't! It was most delightful, for he had the same pleasant smile and ways that I remembered so well. He told me that he had left Rochester and lived in Albany, was very wealthy, and had a fine family of sons and daughters; and then he thanked me for helping him to such an excellent wife, and told me she had been his right hand all these long years. *He* called them ‘short.’ He brought her dear love to me; for he had left home on purpose to find me, and begged me to come and make them a real long visit. And then he wanted to know all about me; and I told him how long I had been a widow, and how, soon after my husband's death one of my darlings had gone home to meet him and her Heavenly Father; and how the rest were married away; and I passed most of my time with them because they loved me so dearly, and the little farm was lonely. And after that he went away, and I sat down and had a good hearty cry.”

She paused, and I said softly, “Did you go to visit them?”

"No," she answered, "I never did, for a few weeks after that, *he* went away."

"And where does he live now, cousin Miranda?"

"IN ETERNITY," she said.

No description can convey the solemnity with which she uttered those two last words. Her story was ended.

The fire now flickered and gleamed, now burned with a sombre flame, and in the deep stillness of the room, seemed *whispering* those words over again. I looked through the window pane, and saw two or three big stars gazing down upon us like spirits in the sky.

Little Allie's great gray eyes were brimming over with tears; the child understood it all; and Adelaide had been listening with such rapt attention, that at those last solemn words, a perceptible pallor had spread like a veil over her sweet young face. Then I seemed to feel that this story had been told with the loving intention of conveying a latent warning to my darling; and I prayed God in my heart that she might ponder well upon this jewel of experience so delicately and lovingly presented, none the less precious from its quaint setting,

and *know herself*, lest she should some time recklessly throw away a good man's love.

I had spoken my last words with a foolish, trembling voice; but on looking round, I saw that I need not have been ashamed of it; for the women were in tears, and the men little better.

"H-e-m!" Mr. Growler cleared his throat with such tremendous energy, we all jumped in our chairs. "I—I—confound it! What's the matter with my eyes? I see double!" he cried, rubbing them spitefully, "I venerate, I love cousin Miranda! I shall marry her! That is, if she'll have me! I don't care if she is a hundred years old! The more the merrier with such a woman!"

Prophetic Mr. Growler! What if he should marry my cousin Miranda? I rather liked the idea. To be sure, he always did his utmost to look and act as if he had been soaking in a barrel of vinegar, about half of every day; but there was not an endless store of love and charity under that sour exterior; oh dear no! We hadn't found him out a darling; certainly not! We didn't call him in private a heavenly old humbug; never!

"Aunt Miranda!" cried young Appreciate,

“how charming that sounds! what a dignified majestic name! and her hints, dear Miss Adelaide, how admirable! Do you not think a young lady should be very careful—should deliberate a long time, before she refuses a faithful heart?” Appreciate made this inquiry with a lackadaisical look and *his* heart in his mouth. It very nearly choked him; and that, with the glance he gave her, made his question appear very personal and particular.

Instead of turning upon him a heavenly smile, by way of answer, cousin Adelaide got frightened and was provoked that he should “say things” before so many people. She was sure they were all laughing in their sleeves. How dared he make her blush so! She knew perfectly well that he loved, adored, almost worshipped her; but he was not to get her laughed at, for all that. So the sweet angel turned tyrant, and raising her long lovely lashes fired a deadly shot of anger at him, and gave a little satirical giggle which withered him. He never imagined that she was just one hair’s breadth from crying. In a moment more she had made an excuse to leave the room; and when she returned, I could see that tears had been wiped away, for her violet eyes had a dreamy, sad expression.

While we were drinking our chocolate, and poor young Appreciate, miserable, for the first time since our evenings began, was listlessly playing with his spoon and cup, I heard her gently whisper, "I am sorry I was so cross." At the sound of the sweet murmur, every nerve in him thrilled, and the color darted into his face as he answered, "I wish I could believe you really in earnest." He sighed deeply; and the shy girl, frightened again, drew back with a sudden reserve, and his wistful look in her face brought small comfort to him.

Adelaide walked beside *me*, going home that evening. Faint-hearted Appreciate! Fearfully in love, and by consequence at the mercy of a demure little girl of fifteen. Never heard of such a thing before! A handsome, intelligent fellow turned into a miserable noodle. Certainly Adelaide deserved a good shaking; so I shook her when I got her home, without explaining why; and kissed her and packed her off to bed.

CHAPTER XI.

THE long promised "Marble Bust" made its appearance on the occasion of our next meeting. Harry had altered and altered, he said, till he was thoroughly discouraged : he declared it was hardly worth the reading.

"We have both been so worried, too," put in the little wife. "Our darling Carrie has had a very bad cough, quite bad enough to alarm us. She is better to-day, dear little soul ! but I feel so anxious I have told my maid of all work to sit with her the whole evening. So Harry to-night is door-opener, and I am waiter to the company ;" and she bobbed a little courtesy to us, and said in a mincing voice, "If you please, ladies and gents, I knows how to wait in the genteelerest manner, quite out of the common," and she dropped another little courtesy.

“You’re right there,” cried Mr. Wilton, laughing. “I never had a servant who courtesied to *me* when she waited upon me ; and my wife says when she engages new ‘help,’ and goes into the room to question them, they never dream of rising on her entrance and standing respectfully, as they should. Not they ! What’s the use of coming to a free and equal country if they can’t behave like pigs, and wear crinoline and silk dresses with flounces, while washing the dishes ? Why ! one of them told my wife there was no ‘quality’ here, and she would *not* make muffins every morning for breakfast ! So she ‘discharged’ us.”

We laughed at this “o’er true” description of one of the abuses of our glorious republic ; then we turned, sad to think there were some who had been public servants and called themselves patriots, who for their own ambitious and depraved private ends were straining every nerve to bring this, the best government the world ever saw, to ruin, even now.

But I dreaded to have anything said, well knowing that Mr. Growler grew frantic if the war was mentioned ; if he could have had the power, the price of hemp would have risen amazingly, so great

would have been his demand and immediate use of that article for the benefit of Seceshdom.

So I said—"Come, Harry, let's have your 'Marble Bust.' I am all curiosity—none of us will listen with marble hearts. If we yawn, you can stop. *Voilà!*"

"At the first yawn the 'Marble Bust' goes into the fire; so have a care, Wilton!"

"He!" cried his wife, "let him try! If I see his mouth beginning to open I'll play chinchopper, like the children, and he's so afraid of me he won't dare to stir if he *is* six feet high, and as strong as a lion—would you, dear?"

At this lamb-like ending of such a terrible threat, we all laughed heartily; and Harry, thanking his little ally, and begging her for his sake, to keep a sharp eye upon all of us, began as follows:

THE MARBLE BUST.

"My eyelids steeped in languor meet.

I dream: a stately knight and tall,

O'erleaps the rude and frowning wall,

And bends him lowly at my feet."

Within an easy distance of New York, up on the Hudson River, there is an elegant country man-

sion situated on the apex of a beautiful grassy knoll; the grass so thick and soft that but for the open-eyed daisies, that *will* spring up here and there, you would seem to be treading on emerald green velvet.

A semicircular grove of evergreens, firs, and larches, form an admirable background and relief to the house, which is painted of a creamy tint, with brown copings and cornices. Crowning the handsome gateposts, at the entrance to the park-like lawn are two classical vases, from which in summer, the golden honeysuckle, eglantine, and other lovely flowering plants throw profuse tendrils caressingly downward in loving tribute to the natural taste of the young girl who placed them there.

The winding drive brings you first to a beautiful little rustic bridge, light, delicate, but strong. It is thrown across a ravine, full of fairies on moonlight nights for romantic young ladies, and will-o'-the-wisps, and goblins for sinners. Crossing this a moment after, you are riding through a dim Gothic aisle so long, that the perspective lessening is quite perceptible. It is formed by training the branches of the *arbor-vita* so that they are joined overhead; and you would be surprised, to observe how ad-

mirably this gives the impression of the "regulation dim religious light" of an arched and Gothic aisle. Indeed, visitors coming suddenly out of the gloom, are astonished at the remarkable brightness of the sun, and find themselves curiously winking and blinking, and quite unable to return the inquiring stares of the respectable brown stone lions, which a very short turn of the road discloses to them as grimly defending and adorning the front door.

The interior of the house is admirably planned, and the rooms are magnificently furnished; but for a list of particulars I beg to refer you to Messrs. Marcotte and Meeks, who fortunately obtained the contract. *I* could not begin to do justice to the carved marvels in satinwood, rosewood, and oakwood of these artists; neither shall I make more than "mere mention" of the fine specimens of sculpture ornamenting the halls, or the beautiful paintings ornamenting the walls, except to say of the latter, that the owner had had them executed to his own order when abroad, giving special directions that such copies as "interiors," &c., *should be painted twice the size of the originals—or no pay!* This was really a miraculous conception, and invariably stultified *those who knew.*

There is a billiard room with excellent appointments, a fencing room plentifully provided with foils, masks, buttons, &c., and abundance of spare rooms for the many visitors (friends, shall I say) who come up from New York to make an afternoon call; and as a never-varying, but slightly comical matter of course, immediately accept the faintest invitation to stay all night—"dear me, had a night-cap in my pocket quite by accident."

And now the family. It consisted of Mr. Douglas, his daughter, and Mrs. Stubbs, his widowed sister.

Mr. Douglas, though exceedingly proud of his name and family, was also remarkably fond of money. He had married in early life a young lady who, dying, left him ten thousand a year and a daughter to bring up. About the same time his sister had scandalized the family name, by marrying Stubbs the grocer; but then Stubbs was very rich, and Shakespeare says, "What's in a name, as long as you have money?" Stubbs (good soul for *that*) left her a widow in two years; and she, rich and childless put all her affairs into her brother's hands, saying, "If you will look after my property, I will bring up your daughter. If you will be my

man of business, I will be your daughter's governess."

So Mr. Douglas worked like any farmer, and added yearly to his already large fortune. He established a large brick factory on his estate; cultivated strawberries and cabbages for sale; collected his sister's rents and interests with savage punctuality, and took precisely as deep an interest in her affairs as in his own, because—Helen was her only heir.

Mrs. Stubbs was an oddity—an institution. She would have been a curiosity in a museum. Almost as tall as her brother, if she had only had a little more mustache she could have enlisted under General Fremont as a body guardsman. Her hands and feet were tremendous; her frame, built as solidly as a house, was surmounted by a head which, if not handsome, was at least large. Her nose was aquiline and threatening; here mouth severe, disclosing a dangerous block of teeth white as snow and *not* bought of the dentist. Her arms and shoulders were massively beautiful, and she knew it, and took good care to show them. You might see her at almost any hour in a low-necked dress, caring not a straw for custom or fashion. She cut her own dresses, and the results were amazing as well as

novel. When her bonnets were sent to her from the milliners, out came her scissors and in three snips she would convert the poor woman's masterpieces into dismal wrecks.

Her costume was a mixture of all styles, modes, and materials. Eruptions of buttons in unexpected places; twenty different colored bows of ribbons worn all at once; and breastpins stuck all over, so that her stomacher looked like a well-furnished pin-cushion. She would have given Madame Diden the nightmare, and rejoiced over it afterward.

Her mind was of a similar pattern to her dress, but that was the fault of her family, who maintained that a man could never know too much or a woman too little. I know a man at this moment of rare intellectual attainments who looks exceedingly amazed when his wife gives utterance to a beautiful, tender, far-reaching thought; and is absolutely disgusted when she shows pleased and intelligent comprehension of a logical theory or abstruse idea. *He* too maintains that women are made to *love*, and their capping Latin verses, and construing problems in logarithms, plays the deuce with the original wise intention.

Lords of Creation! don't be so *afraid*.

Thus it came to pass that Mrs. Stubbs, *née* Douglas, defied all the rules of orthography ; miscalled words by the dozen, though she talked so fast that her ridiculous blunders frequently escaped notice ; ran from one subject to another ; told twenty stories at once without connection, order, or transition, and half the time did not know what she said, what she did, or what she meant. It may seem strange that Mr. Douglas should have intrusted the education of his daughter to such an unreasonable woman ; but, as I have told you, he was very busy making *money* ; and is not that sufficient pressure on the brain ? The country might be going to destruction, and the world coming to an end, and he would work his one idea all the harder. Then don't you be unreasonable, and expect him to bother himself about one little girl. He knew if she did not learn much that ought to be known, neither would she learn much that ought not to be ; besides, he had a theory that the best tutor for a girl was her husband.

And so this young creature grew up under her aunt's eye, who took care that no master under sixty should come near her charge ; even the dancing master not being excepted, who gallantly picked up her pocket handkerchief with unspeakable torture from

the lumbago in his back. The only books permitted were Walter Scott's, Madame Cottin, and a few highflown romances of chivalry, which had been the delight of Mrs. Stubbs' own girlhood.

Helen, at this time, was not over sixteen, but tall and well developed. You might have thought her cheeks were a little too rosy, and her hands somewhat too red ; but an excess of color is not unobjectionable in very young girls. Her mouth and teeth were charming ; her figure lithe and graceful ; and her feet and hands, if not of the smallest, were beautifully formed.

Her mind—ah ! her mind was as yet a mystery. She was no talker, partly perhaps, because nobody said anything to her. Her father had no time, and her aunt took the lion's share in the conversation. The gentlemen who visited at the house did not think it worth their while, or it might just be possible, did not know how, to draw out a silent child, who never having been to boarding school, where girls learn, oh ! how much more and worse than parents imagine, did not encourage them to try by her knowing manner.

And so she passed for nearly a fool ; and when she went to walk in the park or woods adjoining,

book in hand, and escorted invariably by her maid or old Peter, Mrs. Stubbs would say to herself, as she followed her with her eyes, "Poor little thing! she says nothing; but may an alligator eat me if she thinks either." The aunt was far from supposing that the lonely little girl's head was full of the old romances she read, and that she put herself in the place of every heroine, and had already had in imagination more adventures than the fair Angelica, or the Lady Dulcibella of the tale.

One day, early in June, Mr. Douglas went away on a journey; and Mrs. Stubbs had darted off like a flash to New York; a sudden crotchet having got into her head that she would have what she called her "*busk*" taken.

"I go to New York to order my busk," she cried, kissing her niece, "and you must keep house. If the servants misbehave, tweak their noses for me, my dear. I shall be back in the afternoon train."

So Helen had the long summer day to herself and her dreams. In the afternoon she wandered out, followed at a respectful distance by old Peter. At an unfrequented corner of the park, near a ha-ha wall was a grand old oak, with a rustic seat under-

neath; a small gate kept locked, because little used, was near. Helen sat down under the oak and took a book out of her pocket. It was called "The very true history of the wonderful adventures of the incomparable Belinda."

She looked for her mark and read aloud:

"Know, then, that the wise and beautiful princess was sought in marriage by the eldest son of the King of the Great Gawks and by the Caliph of Shirat."

"Poor thing," said Helen; "I would have taken neither. But what said the princess?" She read on.

"And much did the fair Belinda lament; and found no consolation anywhere, because the prince had a crooked face, a nose both short and flat, and ears the size of frying pans."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Helen, "he must have looked like Mr. Smith, the gentleman my father wants me to marry. Now let's see how the other turned out."

"And the Prince of the Great Gawks was lean and lanky in his person, and chalky in the face, as if his veins ran milk and water instead of blood."

"Mercy on me! that's not a little like Mr.

Livingston, my aunt's man. Now let's see what happened."

"The poor princess wept incessantly, and heartily wished for a friendly dragon, who with a fiery tongue, pestiferous breath, and monstrous claws, might slay them both. At last the tournament was held, and these lovers were to run a course against each other; and the hand of the princess was the prize.

"The beautiful Belinda and her ladies were seated on a scaffolding, spread with crimson velvet, overlooking the lists; they were splendidly attired in cloth of gold, and bedecked with pearls and jewelry.

"But before the rival champions came to blows, there entered the lists a knight richly adorned and armed in white, who uplifted his emblazoned silver shield, and cried out, "Put no lance in rest against each other! I will defeat you both! I will make both bite the dust! His voice was so terrible, that the like never before was heard; and both knights and horses were fain to tremble with fear. But the beautiful princess trembled with joy.

"Without another word, the **White Knight** poised his lance and charged the caliph.

"At the first dash, down he went with a piercing

shriek! and immediately thereafter became insensible.

“Then round wheeled the conqueror on the prince. His onset was so tremendous that his lance was shivered. Quick as the lightning he turned, caught the prince round the body, dragged him from his horse and threw him with such force on the ground that he was nearly severed in twain.

“And the princess and her ladies applauded, and waved their kerchiefs, and thought the White Knight handsomer than an angel.

“Then came he before the ladies all, and bending knee to earth at the feet of the fair Belinda, said, ‘Lady, I am the Prince of Silver; and as silver melts in flame, so melts my heart in the flame kindled by your unutterable charms.’”

Belinda—I mean Helen, now went on reading with her eyes tight shut.

The day was sultry; the leaves of the old oak seemed sleeping; the warm summer sun, poured a flood of splendor over everything. The air was filled with the delicious perfume of cut grass; and the shining river reflected the sapphire blue of the sky above.

Helen was in that delectable state between

sleeping and waking, when meditation and dreams, truth and reality, seem to join hands.

She imagined wry-faced Mr. Smith buckled up in a cuirass, the tail of his long coat sticking out beneath, with a saucepan on his head, the handles of which were represented by his ears.

On the other hand, Mr. Livingston, long and lanky, making direful faces through the visor of a plumed helmet. She saw too the gallant Prince of Silver, but could not make out his features, as they too were hidden beneath his casque.

"Shall I never see his face," she sighed; "it is high time if he means to deliver me from the Caliph Shirat Smith and the Prince Great Gawk Livingston—I've waited quite long enough."

And in her meditative doze, she repeated the words of a child's song:

"One night I heard the dogs bark,
I went to the window to see,
And there came a young man hunting,
But he was not hunting for me."

Suddenly a meteor seem to rush by her. A tall young man with a black beard had sprang at one leap over the wall, and dropped on his knee on the

grass before her. She started up, while old Peter hastened toward her as fast as his spindle legs would let him.

Scarcely awake, Helen's first thought was that the Prince of Silver had arrived at last. She stut-tered out some incoherent words, "Prince—my father—your rivals—Oh!" The young man got up hastily, bowed very politely, and said, "Excuse me, young lady, for coming in so like a bombshell, and falling accidentally at your feet. I have been shaking that little gate for the last quarter of an hour, and not succeeding in opening it, I took the shortest way to get in. My name is David Dow, and I have come from New York to take Mrs. Stubbs' bust."

David Dow always reminds me of the heroes in Dumas' novel of "The Three Guardsmen." Imagine the figure of D'Artagnan, the pride of Athos, the vivacity of Aramis, and a little of the simplicity, the *naïveté* of Pathos, and you will have an exact idea of our young sculptor.

His figure was tall and as supple as a steel spring; and though of almost slender symmetry, muscular and powerful. His broad and polished forehead was set off and adorned by a profusion of

curling black hair ; his mustache turned up at the ends in an adorable twist ; and his large, liquid, blue eyes sparkled and melted beneath the most beautiful, jet-black brows. . Altogether he was what the young ladies call, " a love."

Add to these, pearly teeth, which seemed delighted to live in a charming, laughing mouth ; a long and slender nose, like that in the portraits of Francis I. ; child-like hands ; a woman's foot ; and I think your senses—if you are a young lady, reading this veracious history—will begin to totter, and you will be ready to exclaim like Desdemona, " Oh that Heaven had made me such a ——" stop ! wait ! That quotation won't do—Desdemona—odd creature ! was hifaluting about a gentleman of color. There's no telling what *may* happen when the war is over, slavery a myth, and the second sentence in our glorious Declaration of Independence comes to be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing *but* the truth ; but until that happy time at least, and ever after, I earnestly trust young ladies will dream of lovers of David Dow's shade of complexion ; and I hope with all my heart their dreams will come to be as true as is my story.

This handsome young fellow was the son of

an honest but poor vegetable gardener on Staten Island. At four years old he pulled weeds: at twelve he helped to make the beds—garden beds: at fifteen he rode about in a country wagon and sold cabbages and turnips. Then feeling ambitious, he came to New York and worked for a marble cutter, who first gave him stones to polish, then epitaphs to engrave, and finally monuments to sculpture.

He showed surprising taste and skill; and one of those few-and-far-between-angels, this time in the guise or disguise of a rich man with a large heart, sent him to Rome and Paris with a sufficient yearly allowance, there to learn his art.

He took his kind old mother with him, his father being dead. He studied and worked like a beaver; he carried off the first prize of the academy; and he returned home to the country which his mother was pining to lay her old bones in, to become illustrious by-and-by, no doubt, but now to struggle as a rising man must, for the means to live.

His mother kept house for him in three small rooms of a house in Tenth street, near Tompkins Square. He earned a little money by placing some

of his works in the School of Design, founded by that good and noble man Peter Cooper, who will be most assuredly one of the *seraphim illuminati* in the heavenly world above. May God bless him now and forever!

David also designed and sketched subjects for clocks. His busts and medallions were beautifully executed. His groups, which he could not afford to embody in a large form, and consequently had to sell to the dealers in bronzes, were of the boldest and most classical designs. He worked with passion, not for money or glory, but for the love of his art. The love of an artist for his work can only be compared to that of a mother for her child. Even a father cannot love so much—does not love a child with all the ardor of his soul.

Thus David succeeded, not without many painful struggles, in gaining a livelihood; like many noble natures, he had a thousand times more talent than money.

Generous and thoughtless, he almost gave away his works. The dealers eagerly bought of him, and took precious good care not to let him suspect his rapid progress and growing reputation. The country-bred prudence of his mother was useless

here. The good old soul scarcely knew the difference between a statue and a tombstone.

He worked by fits and starts, like all artists: pressing debts did not prevent him from taking a holiday when in the mood. This was a wise instinct. A mill can grind all day and every day; but a brain thus worked would turn out but poor flour.

When David did work he would not quit it if the statue of Memnon were singing in his ear; and when he was in the vein for amusement no power on earth could have dragged him to his studio, not even that of hunger, which tames the wolf.

He had only one regular habit, that of bodily exercise. He made his fencing master come and awake him early in the morning, and it was at the gymnasium that he digested his breakfast. In this way he became incredibly strong and dangerous in proportion.

He is the last man who keeps up the custom of throwing people out of the window. I remember, one day, he threw a plumber who had insulted his mother out of a second story window. There were no more rude tradesmen in the house after that! With his mother and friends he was the very

impersonation of tenderness. He embraced his mother with a gentle fondness, as if he feared he might crush her. She would never keep a servant; and he could only, when his purse was replenished, thrust upon her hats, dresses, bottles of cordials, parasols, anything and everything that came into his head, in spite of her earnest entreaties to him to save the money.

When Mrs. Stubbs came to find him he was just beginning a new working season. It was high time. Since the first of May he had been idle—off on a pedestrian tour—and had completely forgotten that on the fifteenth of July he had to pay two hundred dollars to his assistant, and forty dollars on the first of August to his landlord.

David, who seldom had a call, was surprised to see this wild-looking woman come in. She marched straight up to him and put out a great hand, which he hesitated to take.

“Take that!” she ejaculated. “You don’t know me, but I know you. I bought your *wreckship* of Don Juan. You are a great artist.”

“My shipwreck of Don Juan!” exclaimed David, still astonished.

“Yes, your wreckship of Don Juan! It is in

one of my parlors, on the clock. But that's not all, I want my Busk for my niece, who is going to marry Mr. Livingston or Mr. Smith, I don't know which. How much will you take me for? Quick! how much?"

"Twelve or fifteen sittings, madam."

"That's not money, you goose!" twelve or fifteen sittings! I can't afford the time. Where shall I have the sittings? Besides, you live too far off; what on earth made you come to this barbarous place! There are twenty dirty-faced, duck-legged children playing in front of the door. You must come to my house, and this very afternoon, or no busk! I will give you four hundred dollars. Is that enough? that will be about thirty-five dollars a day. What do you think of me? I want to be done in marble. Likenesses in bronze are too severe, like the old Romans. You will take a suitable piece of marble and send it to my house. I give you fair warning, if you don't flatter me tremendously, and yet manage that every one shall be struck dumb outright with the likeness, I shall give you the busk for your pay. I won't have Helen turn me into a scarecrow to frighten away the birds!"

“Madam, I trust I shall make for you, not only a striking likeness but a beautiful bust.”

“Don’t talk like a fool! If it looks like me it will be hideous!! I look like the hum-ha, with my mustaches. *You* are the beauty. Turn round, let me see your profile. Really, my dear, you are stupidly magnificent! splendid! I always thought a sculptor and a mason looked just alike. You must go this afternoon to my house. My niece is very good looking, too. You shall see for yourself. Bring all your tools. My niece does not look like me, very luckily. I am curious to know what you will think of her intended, the one I have picked out. Mr. Smith is frightful, but very rich, and that is why my brother stands up for *him*. Mr. Livingston is far better looking, and then his name! what a fine name! What an odd name you have! David Dow! Awful! Here’s my address, only a short walk from the railroad; there is only one park in that region, and that is ours. Mind, you come. We shall have company to dinner—Mr. Livingston among the rest. But look out! don’t you go to making love to my niece, no such fiddle faddle nonsense! In your profession, you don’t

think of marrying. It's all right! Come this afternoon"—and out she sailed.

No cataract in the world, from the falls of Tivoli to Niagara, could compare with the torrent of Mrs. Stubbs' talk. David acted like a traveller caught in a shower. He wrapped himself in silence, as in a garment. The shower over and madam gone, he collected his scattered senses and found that he had a fortunate chance to make a clear three hundred dollars in a fortnight; the other hundred would pay for the marble and workman.

He was rather pleased with his contemplated sitter's face, and had no objection to a country life, while at the same time he was paying his debts. While he was dressing he told his mother of his good fortune.

"Thank Heaven, my son," she said, "those debts have kept me awake o' nights. I will send you the tools, clay, &c., to-morrow. Let me look over your clothes, and see if the buttons are all right. You must make a respectable appearance. Then you must have money to give to the servants, you know; so take all the money we have, except five dollars." Work hard; don't fall in love with the

young lady, and come back to your old mother as quick as you can."

"Never fear for me, mother," cried David, "I shall have no more feeling than a fish, apart from my art. I will only take ten dollars with me; that will leave you ten; it is all we have, and with this thought constantly before my mind, I shall feel that for such a poor fellow as I, a young lady and an heiress is not a woman."

With this prosaic sentiment he bade his mother good-by; and thus the puissant Prince of Silver set out for the kingdom of the incomparable Belinda.

Helen never believed for an instant that such a handsome young man, of such proud and gallant bearing, could be merely a sculptor. In a moment she had built up a wonderful little romance, quite as probable as that she had been reading.

"He must be of high birth," said she to herself. "His beautiful hands and small feet prove it. And then he is very rich, or ought to be, provided some jealous enchanter or dishonest guardian has not stripped him of his inheritance. At all events they have probably left him some old house on the banks of the Hudson, or on the top of the Catskill Mountains. I would rather have it on the moun-

tain, like an eagle's nest. It is more in accordance with the romance of the thing. Let me see—where can he have met me? At the ball last winter; or perhaps at Saratoga last summer, where I stayed only three days? Yes! I have seen him! Yes! I remember him! It was at the ball! My aunt had a headache and took me away at twelve o'clock, just like Cinderella. Poor prince! what despair he must have been in, when he found I was gone! Since that fatal moment, he has been seeking me everywhere. At last fortune favored him. Yesterday he was in the studio of a sculptor—a friend—who was absent at the moment. My aunt came in; he recognized her; he seized the lucky opportunity, and the rest is plain enough. But will he be able to carry out his scheme? How will he escape the sharp eyes of his rivals? They will soon perceive that my aunt's bust stands still. To be sure I can help him to conceal his real intentions, as I am in the secret; but oh! suppose he should be imprudent!"

Our moon-struck young lady could not consent to figure in a romance with a hero of less rank than a prince. This one then must have come over express from Europe; although in some cabalistic

way known only to herself she had managed to give him an estate in her own country.

David, in sublime ignorance of all this, walked with Helen to the house, talking of indifferent matters, and admiring the beauty of the place. He was by no means blind to the beauty also of his companion, and thought he should like to take her bust for nothing; when he remembered his mother's advice, and scolded himself for the thought.

At the entrance to the mansion they met Mrs. Stubbs, who had just arrived.

"How the deuce did you get in?" she cried.

David told her.

"What! Why the *camels* of the Tyrol are not better jumpers! My brother will instal you in your new quarters. Peter, show this gentleman to the green room. Both the lovers of my niece will sleep here. You shall be in the room between them, and keep them from fighting."

David bowed low to hide a grin, and followed Peter

"Well, Helen," said her aunt, "what do you think of my sculptor? He is to make my *bust*, as a surprise for myself. We begin to-morrow. He has not much of an artist look about him, has he?"

He is abominably handsome! His wife will be a proud and happy woman! He is a hundred times beautifuller than any of the gentleman who come here! But mind! *you* must not look at him. If you discover he is handsome, he shall march, double quick!"

"Can my aunt be in the plot?" thought Helen.

David took possession of a very pretty room, furnished with elegant simplicity. A small book-case held about fifty popular novels, and a few of those more serious works which we read when we want to go to sleep. The window opened upon a charming prospect; the lawn, the garden, and the blue dimpling Hudson. The young artist was charmed, and gazed with a soft, happy expression upon all this loveliness. An emotion of gratitude to the Great Maker swelled his heart; and he already regretted that he would so soon have to go back to the dusty city. True, he might have made many delays; but there was the pressing necessity for the money; and no happiness could make head against the want of four hundred dollars. Absorbed in such reflections, he sat gazing out of the window, till at last his eyes closed, and he slept the sleep of the strong and innocent, till the dinner bell rang.

David found a party of ten or fifteen people sitting on the lawn on rustic seats. Mrs. Stubbs had not yet come down. He looked for a familiar face ; but found no one but Helen, to whose side he immediately hastened in so marked a manner that every one noticed it ; and Helen was so troubled by this, that she could hardly refrain from saying, "Take care ! they are watching us !"

The second time the bell rang, Mrs. Stubbs made her appearance in eleven flounces, took his arm, marched him into the house, seated him at her right hand, and did not say four words to him all dinner time.

His neighbor on the other side was a deaf old lady, and so he had an opportunity to enjoy his meal in quiet. The rest talked of New York and the war, and ran down their intimate friends. David eat and listened. His only attempt was to discover which was Mr. Smith, and which was Mr. Livingston ; this did not cost him much trouble. Mr. Smith was *very rich*, so I may venture to add that he was also red faced, big nosed, small eyed, high shouldered, short armed, and thick legged. If he had not shaved every day, his beard would have grown over his eyes. But it is right to say that he

was very careful of his person. He observed the severest regimen; eat only white meat; never touched pastry or puddings, and wore corsets. He took regular exercise, subscribed to a gymnasium, learnt boxing, fencing, singlestick, broadsword exercise, and rode on horseback; and he did all this to keep back a tendency to grow fat, which threatened him. These exercises, commenced from necessity, became his pleasure and boast from habit. He piqued himself on his physical strength. He was certainly a man of honor, and had as much talent as most fencing masters.

Mr. Livingston despised the strength of his rival, on the principle inferred in the anecdote of the fox and grapes. He was certainly born under the milky way, for he was so white, limp, and thin, that disease would not have known how to lay hold of him, and years left little or no mark. Though full forty, people said of him, "Poor young man!" This feeble creature was a captain in the navy. He entered the naval school at fourteen, and pursued his studies in port. The only voyage he ever made was one round the world, an interesting cruise to him as he was sea-sick the whole time; yet political favor had put him where he was; and the prestige

of his name had completed Mrs. Stubbs' fascination. He had little or no fortune ; but he had been well educated ; and like all officers had polished manners ; for let me whisper that the " shiver my timbers " style the stage is so fond of producing, is not to be found in real life. It disappeared long ago. If etiquette and polite language is ever banished from the parlors, it will be found again on board of our vessels of war.

The two gentlemen watched the face of the new comer ; and for once ceased watching each other. Each felt sure of overthrowing his rival, the one relying on his money, the other on his name. The plebeian depended on the father, the gentleman on the aunt. The arrival of such a handsome young man gave them a start ; he seemed a very likely person to play third lover. His tremendous appetite was some comfort ; a man who eat like a farmer could not be in love. Yet they noticed that Helen, who sat opposite, frequently raised her eyes to glance at the stranger.

On rising from the table the two suitors drew near Mrs. Stubbs. She presented David to them, saying, " Here is my new boarder, Mr. Dow, the *author* of my clock. He is about to *make my head*.

By the way sir, have you ordered your marble to be brought here?"

David could not help smiling, as he replied, "Oh, madam, there is plenty of time for the marble."

"What?! Plenty of time? But my head is pressing! I want it begun immediately."

The artist informed her that it was necessary first to model her bust in clay; then, to make a casting in plaster; and then to touch it up with the utmost care before coming to the marble.

"Gracious goodness! Who'd have thought it? How long!" exclaimed the good lady.

"He wants to gain time," thought Helen, who had not lost a single word.

Thereupon coffee was brought in. There were several young ladies from the neighborhood who came in during the evening. Mrs. Stubbs sat down at the piano and played for them to waltz. David danced with Helen, and acquitted himself admirably.

"Ah!" sighed she, "I was sure of it! No sculptor could dance so! but he will betray himself."

The waltz ended, David took Mrs. Stubbs' place, and played a quadrille, and did it tolerably well. Mrs. Stubbs danced opposite her niece. In the

"ladies' chain" she pressed her hand and whispered, "Do you hear that? For a man who cuts marble—"

"My aunt is certainly in the secret," thought Helen.

After this there was a game of whist; the two suitors, a rich banker from New York, and David.

"The ordinary stake, I suppose," said the banker, "a dollar a corner."

"Very high for a poor officer," said Mr. Livingston.

But David had already answered, "Yes, the ordinary bet."

Helen blushed to her ears. What *would* they think when the Prince of Silver should pull out a pocket book with his crest stamped on it, and stuffed full of gold! She glided up to him, and said, "Mr. Dow, I shall only allow you one rubber, after which I want you."

She had not long to wait, for David lost again and again, and left his five dollars on the table. He laid them down with so much apparent indifference that Messrs. Smith and Livingston exchanged a look, which seemed to say, "These artists must make a great deal of money!"

Mrs. Stubbs noticed nothing. She was playing "Muggins" with a party at the next table. So David walked away in a very thoughtful mood. He was reflecting that he had no money to pay for the carriage of his tools and clay. Helen approached him and said, "Mr. Dow, I am quite ashamed of my ignorance. We have sculptures here, both good and bad. Will you, who are of the profession, give me your opinion?"

She intended to prove to him that she was not his dupe and had never taken him for a sculptor.

David, like most artists, was no critic. He knew a good work when he saw it, but did not attempt to dissect its merits. He followed her, obediently, through the rooms, stopping at every bronze or marble, and settling the merits of each by a single word. He said, "This is good; that is detestable! Here is an amusing group; that one is stupid. This group is the work of an artist; that of an ass!"

"What do you think of this figure, the infant Jesus?"

"It is very well."

"And this Philopœmon?"

"It is the masterpiece of modern sculpture."

“ Why ? ”

“ Because it has never been excelled.”

“ And this Spartacus ? ”

“ A good composition ; but poorly executed.”

“ This Don Juan ? ”

“ Middling.”

“ What ! only middling ? Why it is your own work.”

“ I know it.”

“ Let us stop here. I thank you for your lesson. I am as wise now as you.” “ I wonder,” she thought, “ how he will set to work to take my aunt ! I don't intend to lose a single sitting.”

When they returned, Mr. Smith and Mr. Livingston made a resolution to keep a sharp watch on this young man, who circumvented the aunt, and had *tête-à-têtes* with the niece.

Mrs. Stubbs now left her game, and said in a loud voice, “ To-morrow after breakfast, we shall begin on my busk. Whoever loves me will come.”

“ Madam,” cried both the suitors in the same breath.

That night David did not find his room quite so agreeable. His pockets were empty. Such is man ! no money—no illusions—perhaps that is the

reason why the rich are invariably so much happier than the poor.

The next morning our artist rose and went with the first train back to New York to dispose of his watch. He took good care not to go and tell his mother that he had lost all his money playing cards. Such a confession would have brought him a sound scolding. He preferred to go to a pawnbroker, who lent him twenty dollars without explanations, reproaches, or advice. Besides, what was the use of a watch at the great house? there were a dozen mantel clocks, besides that in the church tower. This last sounded nine as he reëntered the gate on his return, and found the family just sitting down to breakfast.

The guests of the evening before had left, except the two lovers. Mr. Smith took a cup of weak tea. Mr. Livingston just tasted a bit of salmon. Helen pecked like a bird at some cherries; while the sculptor and the model resolutely devoured an enormous chicken pie. Madam informed David his tools had arrived, with a horrible crate, full of greasy clay, and that everything was ready.

The lovers were too eager to watch David not

to sacrifice their usual amusements. The captain usually went fishing, with a green barege veil tied over his hat to preserve his complexion, while Mr. Smith fenced with Mr. Douglas, or amused himself shooting crows. They all took a turn on the lawn before the sitting, and Mrs. Stubbs told Livingston about David's wonderful leap. He was highly amused at this novel way of entering a gentleman's grounds.

"I think," said she, "that my friend Smith has met his match in gymnastics."

"I don't pride myself on jumping ditches. However skilful we may become at such exercises, there is a little animal that will always surpass us."

"What's its name?" asked Mrs. Stubbs.

"The Kangaroo."

"I did not boast of it," said David, simply; "I could not find the door."

"Do you fence, sir?"

"I do. Do you?"

"For the last fifteen years, at my academy."

"And I in my studio, with an old French officer."

"What, sir," cried Helen, "you fence? Papa will adore you."

As they walked back, Mrs. Stubbs said, "It does not offend you, does it, that I have asked them to our sittings?"

"No, madam, if they do not hinder you from keeping your *pose*. As for me, I could work in the thunders of a cannonade."

"Oh don't be afraid for me! I will keep as still as an Anabaptist. Just notice these two lovers. What do you think of Mr. Smith?"

"I think him very fat!"

"Poor man! he does all he can to grow thin, except drinking vinegar. And the captain?"

"Delicate. Boiled custard."

"He is, indeed! I am always wondering the wind does not blow him as high as a kite. He ought to wear stones in his pockets. Which would you choose for a husband, if you were a woman?"

"I think I should require a number of years for reflection."

"Wretch! don't say that to Helen! *She* has been reflecting more than six months. Perhaps you think it singular that we should have presented two lovers at once. That was my idea! My brother would not desert Smith, and I clung to my captain. I said, "Let us invite them both to the

house ; Helen shall choose for herself. If she has any preference, however, she takes mighty good care to conceal it. If you become friends with her, try to find out. She is a perfect devourer of books and scribbler of paper. She reads all day and writes all night. If I were a piece of paper, I would know her thoughts in a twinkling."

Every one who has sat for a portrait knows that all of the first sitting is consumed in choosing the attitude, arranging the light, and various other preliminaries. Mrs. Stubbs' headdress alone took two hours. The worthy lady had dreamt of a severely classical bust, with a Pompadour headdress.

David found that his model had a Roman head, broad Dutch face, narrow forehead, and small skull. He let the maid exhaust herself in making an impossible topknot, about which everybody had some advice to give. Then the sculptor asked permission to try in his turn ; he turned back his sleeves like a surgeon commencing an operation, and seizing the comb, with a few twists made a most admirable coiffure, resembling an ancient cameo. The maid held up her hands in astonishment. Mrs. Stubbs did not know herself in the glass, and pretended they had given her a new head like a doll ; the

lovers whispered the name of the fashionable New York artist in hair; and Helen said to herself, "Did you ever! He can dress hair! but wait, let us see if he can sculpture!"

"David now set to work to sketch her head, and then the real labor began. No windmill in March when the wind jumps to all points of the compass at once, was ever more restless than his model's head. She found it was tedious to remain seated; so she consoled herself by talking right and left, sense or nonsense, calling first one then another, waving her arms like a telegraph, and beating on the carpet with her foot. After an hour of this performance, she declared she was so fatigued that the sitting must be postponed. Poor David had expended more patience in those sixty minutes than a saint in sixty years; and the bust was not even sketched.

"Just as I predicted," thought Helen.

"Oh," cried Mrs. Stubbs, bouncing out of her chair, "one's done, thank Heaven! Eleven more, and we shall have finished."

David did not dare to say that if all the sittings were to be like the first, it would not be finished in a hundred.

This comical work lasted till the end of June; and she bust bore no resemblance to humanity. Then Mrs. Stubbs began to suspect that the presence of so much company was the cause. She told this to Helen—but her niece would not admit it. She was sure that the handsome unknown knew nothing of sculpture, and she was resolved to assist him in concealing his ignorance. “What would become of us,” she thought, “if he were to confess the truth?”

So she made it her duty to disturb her aunt, interrupt David, and shorten the sittings. The poor artist thought with terror of his debts, and cordially swore at his sitter and all her company, not excepting Helen.

What astonished the incomparable Belinda most, was the singular and obstinate silence of her lover. “Alas,” she sighed, “of what use are all his manœuvres and mine, if he cannot make up his mind to tell me he loves me, and implore me to fly with him! Is he afraid of opening his heart to me? Why don't he propose!”

Then to pique him into jealousy, she affected to favor Mr. Smith or Mr. Livingston. She became for his sake a finished coquette; and caused con-

stant revolutions in the house. First Mr. Smith would write triumphant letters to his family, and Mr. Livingston would talk of packing his trunk. Daniel saw nothing. Then, the next day the wheel had turned; and Mr. Livingston would be delighted and his rival in the dismals; and all the time madam did not sit still one moment in her chair; and David saw nothing but the mountains, rising between him and his four hundred dollars.

“Why does he put off his declaration,” still sighed Helen. She untied and opened every bouquet the gardener brought to her room, hoping to find a concealed note, and tore the flowers to atoms for spite at being always disappointed.

On moonlight nights, she sat hours at her window, expecting a serenade. If a gondola had floated by land to the very door of the house; if she had seen descend from it a band of musicians; if little negro pages, dressed in cherry-colored satin, had climbed to her bower with caskets of jewels and fruits of China and Italy, such phenomena would have astonished her less than the inscrutable silence of David.

There did come at last, one night, as she sat at her window—the atmosphere soft and love-

breathing—the sound of a magnificent bass voice, singing in the garden. She could not distinguish the words ; but the music, which was new to her, seemed strangely dreamy and melancholy. She leaned far out, hoping to catch a word, when her aunt entered her room.

David, imagining that everybody was asleep, was walking about the garden, smoking a cigar, and singing between each puff—a couplet of that wild, wierd, witching song, common enough lately, in the streets of New York :

“ John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave,
John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave,
His soul is marching on.”

Helen only heard the sad melody of the air. David sang again ; and the soft wind blew a word or two to her ears.

“ There,” she cried to herself, “ I heard ‘ soul,’ and ‘ pet lamb,’ and ‘ come.’ But oh ! why does he go so far away ? ”

It was just then that Mrs. Stubbs came in. Helen began talking very loud to drown the serenade, which fortunately her aunt did not seem to have heard.



She leaned far out, hoping to catch a word — p 291

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"I have a confounded headache," said Mrs. Stubbs, "Where's the camphor? Or stop! since you are sitting up dressed, let us take a walk in the garden; the open air will refresh me."

Helen made several excuses; but had to go, and she determined to take her aunt as far as possible from the nightingale. Unluckily the breeze seemed to freshen, and carried some notes to their ears.

"Hallo! listen!" exclaimed Mrs. Stubbs, "a serenade!"

"I heard nothing, aunt."

"Do you think I have no ears? I heard perfectly well. There! Hark!"

"You are mistaken. It is your headache, aunt."

"No it is *not* my headache, you little goose! It is—yes!—It is—'John Brown.'"

"Come away, aunt, I am afraid!"

"Afraid of Mr. Dow? But I tell you, he sings very well, whether he works well or not. If his work only resembled his song. Come this way, and we will surprise him."

Helen trembled like an aspen leaf. Her aunt led her within twenty yards of the singer. The young girl coughed to warn him.

David, composed as one of 'Homer's gods, thundered out another verse.

"There! you see, I was right," said Mrs. Stubbs, "he is singing 'John Brown.'"

"How very fortunate," thought Helen, "he had presence of mind to change the song."

Mr. Douglas was expected back the next morning. Mrs. Stubbs told at breakfast how she had passed the night, listening to her artist, who sang like a duck of a nightingale.

The lovers opened their eyes! When they learned that Helen had been with her, their surprise turned to stupefaction! They knew not what to do. They had never felt any particular liking for Mr. Dow; but now they hated him. To be sure, madam had a right to choose her own sculptor; but to take her niece out walking at midnight, with a handsome young man, was carrying a joke too far altogether. After all the sculptor was no Phoenix. His principal works were perched up on clocks; he had labored two weeks on one bust, and nothing had come of it; he was no wit; really, Mrs. Stubbs had seriously damaged the family interests by her capers

and caprices. In short, it was high time for Mr. Douglas to come home.

Meanwhile no one thought of missing the sittings. David, discouraged enough, raised for the fifteenth time the damp cloth which covered the shapeless bust. The lovers looked at him with malicious pity, and Helen, troubled by the expected arrival of her father, wondered how the poor youth would get out of the scrape. She scolded her aunt, and made her change her attitude twenty times.

"Are you in the vein to-day?" cried Mrs. Stubbs, "Come! be less stupid! Last night you sung, and I was pleased. Now model!" and she bounced half way round.

"Madam, I know your face perfectly well; and I shall make great progress in an hour, if you will only keep still."

"Have your wish. I do not move. I say nothing. I sit. There!" and the good lady made another bound in her chair, and a series of grimaces fearful to behold. Then, unable to stop talking, she cried, "Silence! I hope all the company will stop talking! Hm! If I were a pretty girl like Helen, you would put more heart in your work, I know."

"Mr. Dow," said Helen, watching his face, "do you think any one ever became an artist by the power of love?"

"Certainly—on one condition."

"And what is that?"

"Not much; only ten or twelve years of labor."

"What a matter-of-fact man! You do not believe in the power of love?"

"If any one should disbelieve," gallantly said Mr. Smith, "you would soon convert them."

"Mr. Smith, if you are so complimentary, I shall not be able to reason logically. Where were we? Oh! Aunt, hold yourself more erect! I say that love can work miracles. For instance, I am a princess—say the princess of Belinda, daughter of the king of what you please. I am riding in a carriage, drawn by four white horses—no—by four white unicorns, that is prettier and more rare. A shepherd, keeping his sheep sees me passing—he falls in love with me. The next day he sends me a sonnet."

"By what means, pray?"

"By the air—under the wings of a carrier dove. That's the every-day way. The sonnet is admirable! love has made him a poet."

"It has taught him a great deal more," said Mr. Livingston, "prosody, orthography, the art of writing, to a man who knew nothing but driving heep; and all in one day; not to mention in addition the special laws of a sonnet, which are somewhat complicated, I assure you."

"Well then—I give up poetry. But painting! A young Italian lady is in the power of a cruel guardian, who insists upon her marrying an old monster because he is rich. A handsome gentleman introduces himself in the disguise of a celebrated painter. He has never handled the pencil, but love guides his hand. Will you still say that such a thing has never happened?"

"Certainly not—but I should like to see it," said David; "drawing is not learned by nature; and as for coloring, there are members of the academy who have never been able to learn it."

"Is that really true, Mr. Dow?"

"Yes, Miss Douglas."

"But you, who are a sculptor—is that too against me? Admit, that a gentleman, who never handled a modelling tool, might by force of love, and to gain one he loved make—a bust!"

"Really, six months ago, I would not have be-

lieved it. Now I agree with you. I believe in the miracles of love."

Helen felt herself turn pale. All the blood in her body rushed to her heart.

"Is it a history?" she asked, with a trembling voice.

"A true one. I can tell it to you."

Mrs. Stubbs, during this conversation, had accidentally kept quite still; and David vigorously plied his tools, while he told this story:

"Six months ago I was finishing a group for the Spanish ambassador at Washington, when I received a visit from an old schoolmate. He came to New York to edit a paper. But the 'North Star,' or whatever its name was, did not thrive; for my friend often needed a dollar. He used to wear in January a cotton jacket and white hat.

"One day he met in my studio a young girl named Julia, who stood for her feet and hands. She is very pretty and well behaved. My friend Gray watched her for half an hour, as if he were stupefied. After she left, he raved about her; never had seen any one so beautiful. She was his fate. He insisted upon knowing her last name and residence; he was ready to marry her that

moment, and combine their two miserable lives in one.

“I warned him—told him that the girl supported a cross old aunt, who would not let her marry—all in vain. He begged me to send for her to sit, even if I did not need her—he would be at all the expense; but I paid very little attention to all this nonsense, for he acted like a madman.

“For some days after I was away at work. On my return I found ten or twelve notes from Gray in my studio. He had been to see Julia; she had shut the door in his face. Then the poor fellow came to me and shed bitter tears. ‘Oh,’ he exclaimed, ‘why am I not a sculptor? then she would come and sit to me, and I could look my fill on her lovely face.’

“He asked me to lend him some tools. I gave him a handful. One month after, in February, he came again. I hardly knew him; his eyes were bright; his face animated; his step vigorous; he was almost singing. What had *not* changed was his jacket and hat. He began to talk immediately about Julia; he was more in love than ever; he now hoped for a return; he had made her bust from memory; and gave me no peace until I went

with him to see it. Over to Brooklyn, where he lived, we marched; and tired enough we opened the door of his room.

“The bust was on the table. He raised the cloth—I did not then believe in miracles—and I said, ‘This is not your work.’ I assure you, I would willingly give all I have done, or expect to do, to have made that wonderful bust of Julia. There was something simple and grand, vigorous and passionate about it; it reminded you of the designs of Albert Dürer—of the most beautiful sculptures of the middle ages. It shone, that bust of reddish clay in the poor garret room, like a masterpiece of light. I told the artist all my thoughts. He thanked me, he embraced me, he was mad with joy; he saw the day before him when Julia would come to his studio. I begged him to be at home the next day at three; and I took with me two rich connoisseurs. They shook hands with him; declared he would be a great artist and advised him to send the bust in plaster to the Exhibition. I glanced round the poverty-stricken room, and then at the gentlemen, and wondered where the money for the casting was to be found. They understood; and when they left, Gray found twenty dollars on

the table. (Your head a little more on one side, madam.)”

“And what has become of this masterpiece?” said Mr. Smith, with a sneer, “the public has not seen, or the papers mentioned it.”

“Alas, sir! love has acted like the tiger, and devoured his children. A week after my visit, I repeated it. I found Gray standing in front of his house, his feet in the snow, smoking a pipe. I asked him what he was about.

“‘Don’t you see?’ he replied, ‘I am amusing myself.’ He *looked* broken-hearted.

“‘But how about your love?’

“‘Oh! to be sure. I went to Julia’s with my bust under my arm. She opened the door herself. I told her all I had done for the love of her, and how I should become a great artist and implored her to come and sit to me. She replied that she laughed at me, that I bored her, and that I could take my stupid plaster away. I did not take it far; I broke it against the first lamp post.’”

“Oh the hard-hearted girl!” exclaimed Helen, “has she ever married?”

“Yes, she married an organ grinder, who earns about fifty cents a day.”

“What joy! what happiness,” exclaimed Mrs. Stubbs.

“What’s the matter?” cried everybody.

“My busk! my busk! I am striking! it is I, myself! I leap to the perception! my dear artist, I want to leap to your arms!”

And to his unspeakable amazement, she sprang up and kissed his cheek.

The bust was not finished; but it had made more progress in those two hours than in the two weeks before. Mrs. Stubbs, without knowing it, had sat still as a mouse, during the whole of David’s story; and he had improved the golden chance to the utmost. Helen could not believe her eyes. In her agitation she said, “Ah, sir, you have indeed proved that love works miracles.”

David thought she alluded to the history of Julia. He stood with folded arms before his bust, saying to himself, “That story came in the very nick of time; now for finishing without spoiling. I have time yet. If these people will only let me alone, the plaster will be ready in two weeks more, and then I can ask for some money.”

“How much truth was there in that story?” mused Helen, “a masterpiece made by love! a

beautiful young girl marrying an organ grinder! and oh! by what spell has that lump of clay taken the shape of my aunt."

After the triumphant sitting David, radiant and joyful, ran to the smoking room for his cigar case. He had time to smoke half an hour before dinner. To go into the garden he had to pass through the fencing room. He went in singing. Mr. Smith was there standing at the window, lost in thought; he was disgusted at the serenade, the success of the morning, and the kiss which Mrs. Stubbs had so generously bestowed on the sculptor. He felt an itching in his hands; he wanted to kill somebody, to break somebody's bones. In this philanthropic state of mind he looked longingly at the sharp swords and buttoned foils on the walls. David seemed to him sent by Providence. How charming to strike that broad chest! he would give a fencing lesson to Mr. Dow.

The young artist had no quarrel with Mr. Smith. He did not think him handsome, and would not have taken his likeness for any money; but he stopped to talk with him, examined the foils, and accepted a glove and foil with the innocence of a lamb pre-

pared for sacrifice. The warlike Smith rushed upon him without crying "Look out," and hit him twenty times in three minutes. It was like a hail-storm. At every thrust he murmured, internally, "Take that for your music! that for your sculpture! that to teach you how you meddle in my affairs!" David took them all, saying every time he was touched, according to the rules of the game, "a hit, a hit, a hit."

After five minutes of this work Mr. Smith stopped to take breath and wipe his streaming forehead. David was as cool as before he crossed foils. He looked at the purple face of his adversary, and thought to himself, "I understand your game: now for my turn."

He firmly sustained a second assault more furious than the first; parried, replied, did everything in its order, and returned, with usury, the "waistcoat" he had received. But Mr. Smith would admit nothing of the kind. Instead of crying "a hit" when he was touched, he shouted, returning the thrust, "It was on the arm—on the neck—on the thigh—bah!—the foil slipped then—bad thrust—a failure—we won't count that—there's for you! that's what I call a deuce of a hit!"

"Pardon me, sir," said David, removing his mask, "if the button had been taken off your foil I should not have received a single scratch."

"Ouf!" cried Mr. Smith, panting, "I think we are of equal force."

"Faith, sir!" answered the artist, with charming frankness, "I think I have beaten you."

"Not at all! I hit you every time."

"And I returned the compliment."

"Only once or twice."

"Well," said David, exasperated, "will you play once more to decide it?"

"Shall we have time?" Mr. Smith went into the billiard room to look at the clock. During his absence David quickly took down a sword perfectly sharp, and exchanged it for Mr. Smith's foil. "We shall see," he thought, then said aloud, "the game is one blow; he that touches first, wins. On guard, sir!"

Mr. Smith seized his sword and ran like a madman at David, who kept his guard splendidly. The angry man thrust again and again, and the last time his sword brushed against the fore-arm of the artist.

"Ah! I touched you, sir."

"I think not," replied David.

"You are mistaken, sir. I am very sure that you were hit full in the breast."

"If you are sure, sir—"

"Perfectly."

"Then, how happens it that I am a living man?"

"I do not understand you, sir."

"Have the kindness to look at the point of your sword."

Mr. Smith gave a bounce of astonishment and mortification.

"This is a terrible joke of yours, sir. You have exposed me to the risk of killing you."

"Spare your regrets, sir. I was sure you would not touch me."

At this moment Mrs. Stubbs, Helen, her father, and Mr. Livingston came in, or the argument would have become a sharp quarrel.

"What a man!" thought Helen. "It is exactly like an old romance."

Then David was presented to Mr. Douglas, who had just arrived; and as they were walking in to dinner, Helen whispered to the artist, "Mr. Dow, I forbid you ever to risk your life again."

“That little girl is making love to me, thought the simple sculptor.

At dinner Mr. Douglas studied David's face, while Mrs. Stubbs praised him in every form and tone of admiration. Helen was in ecstasies, Mr. Smith sulky, and Mr. Livingston stupid. As for the hero, he did not lose a single mouthful.

The company separated earlier than usual: Helen to read, Mr. Douglas to ask his sister a hundred questions, the lovers to consult together how to defeat David, and he, good man! to sleep like a top till next morning.

“My dear sister,” said Mr. Douglas, “how do our lovers get on? What says Helen?”

“Just the same as ever, she says nothing; but I think if she has a preference it is for Livingston. Ah! that is a name! We do not marry a man, but a name. A woman may go out without her husband; but whether she will or no, her name goes with her. In company, people who admire her do not ask whether her husband is big or little—they say, ‘What's the name of that pretty woman.’ The *name!* You see it eclipses everything—dress, for-

tune, or beauty! It is the most important thing in life. To think that I should be eternally called 'Mrs. Stubbs'—not that I blame my husband—he is gone, and I lived in peace with him. I loved him in spite of his name and his other faults; but why in the name of justice couldn't he have taken his direful 'Stubbs' to the other world when he went? I can only resign myself to my fate on one condition—Helen shall never marry a Stubbs."

"Smith is not a bad name—"

"Oh no! There are only three millions of them; and Helen shall not be one more."

Mr. Douglas had excellent reasons of his own for favoring Smith. He had an ardent desire not to be the last of his family; he knew Smith would consent to take his name; and Livingston never; so he urged:

"But Livingston, my good sister, is poor; and if you should take the idea in your head to marry again, Helen, married to Smith, would suffer no loss."

"Me marry! me! You are crazy. Who would want to marry an antiquity like me? I know Helen prefers Livingston, and I shall give them five thousand a year. She can't eat more

than that, her teeth are so small. Come to her room. I warrant you she is up, reading. We will make her confess."

Helen, the silent one, now sure of being loved since the miracle of the bust, was full of joy. Happiness, so long constrained, rose to her lips, and when her father and aunt entered and exhorted her to declare her preference, she grew radiant.

"Smith or Livingston; choose!" cried Mrs. Stubbs.

"Neither the one or the other," she replied.

"And why not, niece?"

"Because I don't love them, aunt."

"What are you talking about! When I married Mr. Stubbs, I esteemed—I made the most of his qualities; but I did not love him any more than I loved the emperor of China. Love grows slowly: only weeds spring up rapidly."

"Dear aunt, does a man ever marry a woman without loving her?"

"I did not say any such thing! Don't talk nonsense!"

"Neither of these gentlemen love me."

"How did you find that out?"

"Well, I will tell you. Mr. Livingston is a

man of good birth, well educated, and of agreeable manners."

"Ah-ha!" cried Mrs. Stubbs, triumphantly.
"Wait a minute. Mr. Smith has vivacity, a good voice, and money."

"Eh! eh!" ejaculated Mr. Douglas.

"Patience, father! The one is fair, the other brown and red; the one poor, the other rich. Yet they seem like one and the same person to me. They pay me the same stupid compliments, as if they had learned them out of a book. They look at me with the same expression. If I laugh, they rejoice together; if I frown, they both become images of despair. They invariably turn the conversation upon marriage, and each tries to prove what a pattern husband he will make. If my aunt says a word against avarice, they give a dollar to the first beggar at the gate. If she praises prudence, they search for pins on the carpet. That is not the way people love!"

"What do you know about it, you little goose!"

"I feel it. The heart is clear-sighted at my age. If those gentlemen were in love with me, my heart would tell me so, and I should at least be grateful. They are not courting *me*. It is my *money*."

Mr. Douglas was astonished and struck by his daughter's animated words and manner. He took both her hands and drew her close to him, and said—

“Look me in the eyes. Do you love any one?”

Helen embraced him.

“You do. Is he of good family?”

“As a king.”

“Rich?”

“As my aunt.”

“Handsome?”

“As you, my dear father, and proud and intelligent as you are.”

“Do we know him?”

“You have seen him, but do not know him.”

“Where did you meet him?”

“At the ball last winter.”

“That's an age ago.”

“Yes, I heard not a word of him in six months.”

“Then he has forgotten you.”

“Oh no! father.”

“How do you know that?”

“I have the proofs.”

“I do not ask if you have corresponded, for you are my daughter.”

"Oh! father."

"Who is he, then; tell us his name?"

Helen became confused, and Mrs. Stubbs said:

"You have frightened her, poor little soul! leave her with me, she will tell me her secret."

I do not know how Helen contrived to bewitch her aunt, but not only did she not tell the name of the new lover, but she managed to make her promise to help in a plot against the old ones.

Love is a great teacher of stratagem, and Helen soon concocted a brilliant scheme. "We will prove," she said to her aunt, "that they want your money." She cut out of one of the old romances this sentence, and enclosed it to Mr. Smith. "*The lady and her niece were married the same day to the two knights they loved; and the persons invited to the castle chapel witnessed two beautiful ceremonies.*"

"Now let us consider," said the aunt. "When the servant shall have carried him this precious epistle, he will not throw it in the fire, for it is summer. He will read it. What *will* he think? First, that some one is laughing at him. A trick! a bad joke! When I was about to marry Mr. Stubbs, my father received about twenty anonymous letters.

They declared my intended had eleven wives in Turkey. Well, then, Smith will scratch his head, and say, 'What a fool Mrs. Stubbs is to marry again, with her gray head and mustaches! If she marries, the consequence is clear—the girl loses the fortune.' He'll be off, depend upon it! But Livingston would marry you, fortune or not—he's a gentleman. But let me see! how shall I make Smith believe I have a husband in my mind. He knows perfectly well that for a wonder we have not had fourteen visits in fourteen days. To get married, there must be a husband. Ah! I have it! The sculptor!!"

"Oh, aunt!"

"Why not? he is very handsome."

"No doubt, but—"

"He has talent."

"Yes, aunt; but—"

"He has a ridiculous name, to be sure, but he will make it famous. What I love in artists is, that they are all gentlemen."

"But just think, aunt."

"That he has not a cent? Oh, I don't care for that! I am rich enough for both. After all, the marriage would not be half as bad as that of Mrs. Brown with her gardener."

“ Oh yes, aunt ! but what a part you will make the poor young man play ! ”

“ Oh ! you think an unhappy part, do you ? Not at all. I shall be charming to him. I shall pay him compliments. I shall walk on the lawn with him ; and help him to the chicken's wings, while I make Smith eat bones. Besides, he will suspect nothing ; my manœuvres will only be understood by the initiated.”

So the good old lady told Mr. Douglas that Helen's talk was all a young girl's dreaming fancy. She sent for a friend to visit her with a son and daughter, both having large independent fortunes ; and she wrote to Miss Livingston, an elder sister of her candidate, to whom she still clung, to come and help her scare off the enemy.

But that respectable lady did not hurry herself ; and when she arrived, Smith was already paying court to Miss Kent, the rich young lady, and David putting the last touches on Mrs. Stubbs' bust. The artist had observed nothing ; the cooling off of Smith ; the violent petting of his model ; or the happiness of Helen. He saw nothing but his four hundred dollars ; he did not take the slightest notice of the glances of Helen, or her hints, which

he did not understand. The attentions of Mrs. Stubbs won his heart; he did not doubt that so kind an old lady would advance him the money he needed so much. Full of this faith, he had hurried his work, and had finished it with remarkable success, under the spur of necessity. Those who saw him working so industriously said, "How deeply he is in love! Who would have believed that the evident passion of Mrs. Stubbs should have been shared by so young and handsome a man? He will marry her for money, and also for love!"

No one doubted this state of things, except Helen and Mr. Livingston. Mr. Douglas himself became frightened, and thought of reprimanding his venerable sister.

But Mr. Smith laughed in his sleeve. Seeing his rival more than ever in love, he congratulated himself on having received the mysterious note, and figured to himself the captain's despair, when David should go with Mrs. Stubbs to the altar. He did not think Helen half so pretty, now that he knew she would lose her aunt's fortune; and he devoted himself to the young lady from the city, who encouraged him assiduously.

Mr. Douglas, scandalized by the behavior of his

candidate, began to think better of Mr. Livingston. He repented having ever consented to such an absurd scheme; he trembled lest some gossip about it should arise, and his daughter suffer; he felt the necessity of pressing Helen's marriage; so he contrived in two or three secret interviews to open his heart to Livingston on the subject of the change of name. Mr. Livingston was open to offers, when such a large fortune was the prize. To Mr. Douglas's surprise, he agreed to everything. The bargain made, he told his sister, who had just arrived, the great news. "Really, Mr. Livingston Douglas is not so bad," he said. His sister embraced him with joy, and exclaimed:

"I have come just in time to bless you. That is the reason Mrs. Stubbs wrote for me in such haste."

The morning of the 13th July was a Friday; a day of doubly bad augury. Miss Livingston had used her eyes, done a little questioning, and knew all that was going on in the house. After breakfast she took her brother on one side and said, "What is the personal fortune of Miss Helen?"

"I don't know: nothing—while her father lives."

But why do you ask? Her aunt is to settle a large fortune on her."

"Mr. David Dow's fortune, I suppose."

"What the deuce are you talking about?"

"My poor brother, you know nothing! Mrs. Stubbs is going to marry the sculptor. Every one in the house knows it, except you. This is why Mr. Smith drew back!"

"Good heavens!"

Mr. Livingston rushed out of the room. Never in his life had he had such a color. His whiskers, as white as linen, seemed to turn red. He nearly tumbled over Mrs. Stubbs, who took him kindly by the arm, and said, "Where are you running to? I make you my prisoner. You have behaved like an angel! Mr. Smith is a brute! I am delighted your sister has come, and you shall have my niece."

He looked rather rudely at his faithful ally, and replied dryly, "Thank you, madam! I think some one is being deceived here, and I shall try not to be the dupe!"

Mrs. Stubbs stood transfixed! She imagined a lamb had broken loose. He made a profound bow to the astonished woman, and ran to David, who

was walking by the lake with the young gentleman from the city, Mr. Kent.

“Mr. Sculptor,” said he in an angry tone, “you have made a jest of me long enough! and I feel obliged to tell you, that I like neither cheats nor intriguers.”

Mr. Kent seemed stupefied at this; and David looked at the captain as a doctor in an insane asylum would look at a madman: at last he said:

“Are you speaking to me, sir?”

“To you yourself.”

“And you call me a cheat, an intriguer?”

“And an impudent fellow, if the other titles do not sufficiently paint your likeness.”

David asked himself whether he should catch the captain up and throw him into the lake; but an after thought came; he pulled off his glove and threw it in Mr. Livingston's face.

Never was a duel worse conducted than David's and Mr. Livingston's. The captain had never used a sword in his life, and his pistols, loaded twelve years before, on the occasion of his first and last voyage, remained untouched. David, skilled in all weapons, had never tried his skill or strength, save

when he threw the impudent plumber out of his mother's window. No one ever before had been his own enemy enough to insult David ; and he, who knew so well how to fight, was, as is usually the case, the most peaceable of mortals. All his friends were artists, confined to their studios by taste and profession ; so he had never even been called on as a second.

Mr. Livingston chose for his seconds young Kent, with whom David had been walking at the time of the quarrel, and Smith ; the latter was too prudent to expose himself to a chance of imprisonment, and declined ; but young Kent, almost a child, felt very grand in his new part. He undertook to find another second among his young friends at the New York club, and marched off to the city, his coat buttoned up to the throat, his hands in his pockets, his eyes half shut, and his face full of important discretion. The last thing he thought of was the lives of these two men.

The captain, outraged at the insult and the ruin of his hopes with Helen, was all impatience for the duel. I do not know that he wanted to kill David, but a lucky shot might break off his marriage with Mrs. Stubbs, and give her fortune back to her niece.

The artist, on the other hand, had no time to lose: his rent was due on the 15th and his workmen could not afford to wait. He employed the rest of the day in finishing his bust. At five o'clock he told Mrs. Stubbs he was engaged to dine in the city, and started for New York.

He counted upon two friends who had lately joined the army. But he found their regiment had started while he was away. In despair he went to the studios of two artist friends, who had coolness but no experience, and not the faintest idea about duelling. He begged them to remain at home to receive Mr. Livingston's seconds.

These two children were at their club. David brought them at nine o'clock in the evening the address of his two friends. He met Mr. Livingston as he went out, who saluted him with a profound bow.

At ten o'clock the four seconds opened at one of the studios a very remarkable conference. None of them knew the occasion of the duel. They only knew that Mr. Livingston had insulted David, who had insulted him in return. David himself was ignorant of the captain's cause of quarrel. His ultimatum, reduced to writing, was neither long nor

complicated: "I have nothing against Mr. Livingston; he called me 'a cheat, an intriguer, and impudent;' why, I do not know. Attacked in my honor I threw my glove in his face. If he takes back what he has said, I shall regret what I did. If not, I desire the duel shall take place to-morrow forenoon. If I have the choice of weapons, I demand the sword."

Mr. Livingston might have easily chosen more skilful seconds, but he took these boys to avoid explanations.

Then Mr. Kent said, "Gentlemen, Mr. Dow has thrown his glove in Mr. Livingston's face; we are ordered to inquire the reason?"

Not a rule of duelling was observed. David's seconds did not even know the names of Livingston's. Not a word was said about Helen, or the pretended intrigues of David, or the possible mistake of the captain—which was just what Livingston wanted.

Of course an arrangement was impossible. Mr. Livingston was furious, and David was not sorry to read him one of those lessons which are remembered for six weeks afterward in bed; and therefore he chose the sword.

The seconds, if the truth must be told, were all young, and wanted to see something of a duel. If you wish to arrange a quarrel, *never select young seconds.*

The conference lasted just half an hour. War is declared much sooner than peace is concluded. The meeting was arranged to take place at an unfrequented grove, a mile from Mr. Douglas' house, at six o'clock the next morning.

The choice of weapons belonged to neither, as the offence was reciprocal; and they agreed to draw for it on the field.

Just as the young men were taking leave, Mr. Kent asked, "By the by, gentlemen, have you arms?"

"No, sir. Have you?"

"No—we have none either; we must purchase them."

"But that will excite suspicion. What shall we do?"

"Ah! now I think of it, Mr. Livingston has pistols. Will you be willing to use them?"

"Why not?" said the painter ingenuously. "If they are good, so much the better for the good shot; if bad, they will do no harm."

"Oh, doubtless they are good," said Mr. Kent.

“Well, then, there will be no trouble. Mr. Dow has several swords in his studio.”

During this extraordinary conference, David had reached his humble home. He had been home very regularly every Sunday, to accompany his good mother to church and attend to her wants.

“I only want *you*, my son,” was her invariable answer.

This evening she did not expect him; she had gone to bed at nine o'clock, and was in a sound sleep. David entered his studio softly; took down a pair of swords, dusted them, bent the blades, and saw that the handles were firm.

Wrapping them up in a green cloth, he took them down stairs. “A nice couple of lancets,” thought he, “to bleed Mr. Livingston with. My poor mother will be a little frightened, when I tell her my adventures next Sunday. Bah!”

He was about to leave the house, when some unknown power drew him back. He crept softly up stairs, entered his mother's room, and approached the bed. A night lamp shed a feeble ray through the room. Mrs. Dow, in the midst of sketches, casts, bronzes, and a thousand little works of her son's, smiled as she slept.

She was dreaming of him, honored and famous. David gazed tenderly down on her kind face for a moment; then kneeling beside her, he kissed the small wrinkled hand that lay outside of the clothes, and then he took a corner of the white sheet and wiped the big tears from his eyes. He hurried out to catch the train; and on arriving at the house, slipped quietly to his room, hid his swords, brushed the dust from his clothes, and descended to the parlor.

They were playing a round game of cards, late as it was. In five minutes more Mr. Livingston and Mr. Kent entered. They had come on another car, in the same train.

“At last,” cried Mrs. Stubbs, “I am thankful I have got all my boarders back. For the last five hours I have been like a hen who has lost her chickens. Peter, get supper ready. You seem, gentlemen, to have left us by agreement; you don’t deserve any supper. Come, my dear sculptor, sit by me; let me make you some lemonade; ah, I forgot! you don’t like it. Pass the sugar to Mr. Livingston. He looks as if he needed it badly.”

The captain’s hand trembled as he took the sugar bowl from David. Young Kent, buttoned up

tighter than ever, looked like the young traitor in a melodrama. He tried to eat a piece of cake, but it stuck fast in his throat.

After supper David exchanged a whisper with Mr. Kent: "Does it come off to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"What arms are to be used?"

"This will be decided by lot."

"I have my swords here."

"And we our pistols. We will go out by the small gate; you by the large one, to avoid suspicion. Everybody will be asleep, as they have sat up so late."

Mr. Livingston took his pistols from his trunk. They had not been fired off, as I have related, for twelve years; so he changed the *caps*. He wrote a long letter to his sister; then threw himself dressed on his bed, and did not once close his eyes.

David slept like the great Condé or Alexander on the eve of a battle. At half-past five he was up and dressed. The two men went out without waking any one; Mr. Livingston leaving on his table the letter to his sister.

All were punctual at the place of meeting. The

seconds from the city had slept in the village. They all came on foot, David leading the way.

"How composed you are!" said his friend, the painter, to him.

"I am, if we fight with swords. With these infernal pistols, I can answer for nothing. I shall kill my man."

"Good gracious! how so?"

"It is a very simple thing. Sword in hand, I am very sure he can't touch me, and I can take care of him. With the pistols there is no mercy for the unskilful, because they may shoot you through the head, without knowing how to take aim. Advise them, for their own sakes, to choose swords."

Mr. Livingston instructed *his* seconds to *refuse* the swords. "Then," said Mr. Kent, "you are accustomed to the pistol."

"I? Not at all."

"Does he shoot any better?"

"Yes; I am told he can hit the bull's eye nineteen times out of twenty."

"Good heaven! Then why not take the swords?"

"I will tell you by-and-by."

They had now arrived at the grove. A place

in the centre, about twenty by forty feet, had been cleared, and was as level as a floor. Mr. Kent threw up a half dollar; the painter cried "tail," it came up head.

The pistols were chosen; and nothing remained to be done but to settle and mark the distance. Mr. Kent, by this time, was pretty well frightened out of his conceit and importance; and was confused in his talk. The other young fellow was in tears.

"Put us at forty paces," said David, "and let him fire first. He will miss me, and I will fire in the air."

Then Mr. Kent walked up with a proposition from his man.

"Gentlemen," said he, "Mr. Livingston has never fired a pistol. Mr. Dow is a dead shot. The only way to equalize the chances is to fire off one of the pistols, and draw lots who shall have it. The two adversaries shall stand at five paces."

"But that is butchering," said David.

"We never will accede to it!" cried his seconds.

"Then," said Mr. Kent, with a sigh of satisfaction, "the duel is impossible; and the affair must be arranged."

“ Well, then, arrange it,” cried David. “ I don’t thirst for any man’s blood ; and I am quite ready to pardon the compliments the captain has paid me.”

“ May I tell him what you say ? ” cried young Kent, almost skipping with joy.

“ Certainly.”

You perceive that all the prescribed forms of duelling etiquette were utterly ignored on this occasion. Here was David talking on the field with his adversary’s seconds !

“ He is disposed to make up, I’m sure,” said Kent to the captain. “ He will pardon all you said to him ; the affair is half settled.”

“ What a hero ! ” answered Livingston, who, like all small souls, when they fancied the danger was over, began to bluster. ‘ He refuses to fight when the chance is equal. Go ask him what apology he will make for the brutality of his conduct.’ ”

Again young Kent trotted over, and addressing himself to David, said, “ Mr. Livingston hears with pleasure that you forgive his language, and hopes you will give him another proof of your politeness, by asking his pardon for—”

David heard no more. “ Sir,” he thundered, “ I

ask pardon of no one ; particularly of a man who has insulted me without the slightest cause. Discharge one of the pistols ! ! ”

“ But, sir—”

“ No ‘ buts,’ I beg. The shortest jokes are best ; and this has lasted much too long already.”

He was grand in his rage ; his eyes flamed, his frame dilated, his black locks waved magnificently over his forehead with his fiery energy. His seconds tried to calm him ; but he would listen to nothing. The other, very much cooled off, sent young Kent again ; but David replied that he did not want explanations, but pistols.

Mr. Livingston, pale as death, gave the pistols to his seconds. David examined them with particular attention. “ Thick barrels,” he said, “ very stiff triggers. Who loaded them ? ”

“ The gunsmith, when they were bought.

“ Have you powder and ball ? ”

“ Yes. Do you wish us to load them again, before you ? ”

“ No, it’s no matter.” He took one, and fired it in the air.

“ They are well loaded,” he said. “ Be kind enough to replace the cap.”

The two pistols were now wrapped in a handkerchief. Mr. Livingston chose one; David the other. The painter, who had tremendous legs, took five of his longest strides. The other seconds retired sobbing.

"Gen-tle-men," sobbed poor young Kent; "I—I—will clap my hands—three times. Fire—when you please."

David fired first; his cap only exploded; his pistol was not loaded.

Mr. Livingston, paler than ever, kept his position some seconds, his arm extended, his pistol pointed at David. His legs trembled beneath him; his eyes swam; his body swayed like a willow in the breeze. In such moments, seconds of time become years.

David, with his breast partly protected by his arm, his head by his pistol, lost patience.

"Fire, sir!!" he cried.

"Fire, sir," repeated the seconds, mechanically. Any misfortune seemed preferable to that dreadful suspense.

The captain, without lowering his hand, replied in a quivering voice, "Sir, your life is at my disposal; but I hate to take it. Do beg my pardon."

"No, sir! Fire!!"

"If I fire, sir, I shall be an assassin. Beg my pardon."

"Never, sir! If you do *not* fire, *you are a coward!*"

"SIR!!!!"

"You will miss me; your hand trembles!"

"Do not drive me to extremities!"

David did not think of death, or his mother, or his art. He was infuriated to feel that his life was in the power of this man.

"Fire!" he cried again. Young Kent advanced a step, exclaiming, "Oh! this is too much."

"Stop," said the artist, "I will find a way to give him courage;" and he put his left hand in his pocket to feel for his gloves.

The pistol went off; but—it was Livingston who fell. Every one ran to him, David the first. The pistol had burst, and the captain's arm was broken.

David's two seconds took off their silk cravats, and bound up the arm.

"It will not amount to anything," said David.

"Why the deuce did you want apologies from me, when I had done nothing?"

"Forgive me, sir, and be happy. May she you love—"

" I ? "

" You. "

" Am *I* in love with Miss Douglas ? "

" No ! with Mrs. Stubbs. "

The poor artist looked at Mr. Livingston's head, to see if it had not been touched with a piece of the pistol ; but the cranium seemed intact. David picked up the stock of the pistol, and examined it with the air of a connoisseur. " Who loaded this pistol for you ? " he asked.

" The gunsmith. "

" Exactly ; but in what year ? "

" In 1850. "

" *I should think so.* "

The captain, resting on David's arm, walked painfully back to the village ; where, meeting the doctor, he took them to his own house and dressed the wound, while Mr. Kent ran to the great house to reassure Miss Livingston.

Her first night had been a sleepless one. Struck by the strange looks and manner of her brother, she tossed and dreamed uneasily till daylight ; when she arose, dressed herself, and knocked at the door of his room. As she got no answer, she entered

without ceremony, found the room empty, and the fatal letter on the table. It contained the particulars of the quarrel, the errand on which he was bound, and his will in case of accident. The poor woman, horribly frightened, could just crawl out of the room, and awake Mrs. Stubbs, who awoke her brother, who hunted up Mr. Smith. Helen, who was always early, hearing the noise, came down soon after; and Mrs. Kent and her daughter were not long in following.

I verily believe if Mr. Douglas's ancestors had been buried on the lawn, they would have awakened and joined the party; such a terrible lamentation did every one set up! Never had such a hullabaloo been known in the house before. Mrs. Stubbs and Miss Livingston looked considerably the worse for their hasty toilet; but Helen, her hair falling down, her white robe flowing, agitated and excited but not frightened, looked as handsome as an angel. At the first word she heard, she understood everything.

“Don't be alarmed!” she cried, “nothing will happen to him! I know him! he is the invincible man!”

“My brother?” asked Miss Livingston.

“We are not talking about your brother; but don't be afraid, David will spare him.”

If lionesses talk in the desert, it is thus they must speak of the lions.

There was no need of asking Helen to explain herself. A woman is never ashamed of the man who fights for her. Without hesitation, she turned her glowing face to her father, and told the short story, so full of incident, which the month had developed; the discretion of David, his courage, and the wonderful talent his love had created in him.

As she finished, Mr. Douglas began to reflect that he had paid too much attention to his business, and not enough to his family. Mrs. Stubbs found she was a fool. Mr. Smith winked and blinked and rubbed his eyes, and Miss Livingston could not make up her mind whether to be frightened or scandalized. Helen's passion broke out like those fires which have been smouldering for days on board of a ship. A hatch is opened, and all is in a flame! Her father would rather have been informed of this wonderful mystery before fewer people. But upon the whole, he concluded to appear pleased.

As for Mrs. Stubbs, the most fickle and the

queerest of women, she passed in a twinkling from astonishment to enthusiasm. I would not be willing to aver that her ancient heart had remained insensible to the fascination of the handsome sculptor. She might have imagined it not impossible to take him in earnest for a husband—but there was no objection to having him for her nephew. “It is all the same,” she thought.

However, she reminded her niece of the marvellous unknown, of whom she had spoken a fortnight since, as noble as a king, as rich as herself, as handsome as ———.

“But, aunt, this is he,” cried Helen, in a perfectly confident tone; “don’t you understand he has concealed his name, and taken the name of the artist in whose studio you found him? Only wait till he returns, he will tell us all. As for his fortune, can you think it as small as he pretends. You have not observed with what contempt he speaks of money.”

The lower part of the house, where David lived in the city was occupied by a baker. When his little daughter brought the morning loaf up to Mrs.

Dow, she said, "As Mr. David came home so late last night, you must have been abed."

"What? when do you mean?"

"I mean he came home last night, ma'am."

"You must be mistaken—he is not home."

"I am sure, ma'am, for I was playing at the door; he took away a long bundle, wrapped in green cloth."

The poor mother rushed into the studio; looked round, missed the swords, and nearly fainted with fear. She put on her best dress and hurried to the depôt, and in an hour was at Mr. Douglas's mansion.

She met him at the hall door. "Oh sir," she cried, "it is just what I feared. I said to him, 'David, there is a pretty young lady; do take care not to fall in love with her;' but he is such a big fool!"

At this moment Helen made her appearance, and thought the manners and dress of the good woman had not the remotest resemblance to what ought to have been those of the queenly mother of the Prince of Silver; the romance-bitten girl had but one thought, "He loves me! he has told his parent!" and she immediately embraced the old

woman, who was overwhelmed with this unexpected honor.

At last young Kent arrived, and gave such a comforting account of the duel, that everybody felt relieved, except Miss Livingston, who ordered the carriage, and drove immediately to the village.

Hardly had she gone, when David also arrived, and requested a private interview with Mrs. Stubbs.

"Ah ha!" she said with a chuckle; "all of you stay here; he wants to confess to *me*."

She ran into the hall, caught him by the hand, and drew him into the library.

"Oh ho, sir," she cried with her customary bluntness, "we hear fine news about you!"

David was far more agitated than when he had told Mr. Livingston to fire. He replied humbly:

"Dear madam, I beg your forgiveness. I swear to you, that if I had not been grossly insulted, I should never have shown such disrespect to the laws of hospitality. Besides, I fired in the air. Mr. Livingston wounded himself."

"We know all that. What more?"

"I understand, madam, that after such an affair, it is impossible for me to remain under your roof. I have therefore come to take leave of you, and to

thank you heartily for a reception, the kindness of which I shall never forget."

"What on earth is the man talking about?"

"Your bust, I am rejoiced to tell you, is finished; and, with your permission, I will execute it in marble at home."

"Bust? Fiddlestick! What else?"

"What else?—madam—"

"Have you not something to ask me?"

"It is true, I have, dear madam; and since you encourage me to—"

"Certainly! speak up! *I'm* all right!"

"Well, then, I have to pay my rent to-morrow; if you will have the kindness to advance me two hundred dollars on the bust, I—"

"Oh certainly! Of course, as much as you please! Now! what more?"

"After that, madam, I have only to thank you."

"Fudge! I know all. Go on!"

"All what, madam?"

"All, I tell you! You love my niece?"

"No! madam; I swear I do not!!!"

"But I swear you do! Why did you risk your life on the cast of a die against Mr. Livingston's? Tell me that!"

"Because he insulted me."

"Why did you try to get killed by that frightful Smith?"

"Because he made me nervous."

"Bah! That's a pretty reason; I don't believe a word of it! Come! confess now between ourselves that you are crazy for Helen."

"Mrs. Stubbs, may I die if—"

"Oh don't die! *She loves you!*"

David, at this announcement, was sincerely grieved.

"My dear madam," he earnestly exclaimed, "I have been grossly scandalized! By my mother's head—"

"Your mother is here and admitted that you love Helen. Will you have her for your wife?"

"This joke is very cruel, madam. Whatever my demerits may be—I do not think I have deserved—"

"Yes you have! You have deserved the hand of my niece; I tell you you *shall* have it. A great misfortune really! Do you think her so ugly?"

"Oh no, madam! she is very lovely. The first time I saw her, I thought I should like to make her bust for nothing."

“Do you consider that a compliment to *me*? But never mind! You shall have her all the same.”

No incredulity could hold out against all this, and David at last allowed himself to believe that, in some incomprehensible manner, he had come to be the lover of Helen. Hope and happiness need no announcing; they find the doors open to receive them.

The next summer David Dow, now David Dow Douglas, was sitting at a window with his young wife, looking out upon the lawn; the same lawn upon which he had lighted like a skyrocket soon after he made his first appearance in this veracious history.

“Do you remember?” asked Helen, pointing. “It was there you were presented to me. I was sitting there under my dear old oak, reading a most interesting book—the ‘History of the incomparable Belinda;’ I never read the end of it.”

“And why, darling?”

“Did you ever give me time? Here it is, the unfortunate little book! Shall I read you a chapter?”

“Thank you, my love, I would rather hear you talk. Put the little book back in your pocket.”

"Only the last sentence, dear," and a bright rosy blush mantled on her soft cheek.

"But, of what use would that be, dear, when I don't know the beginning?"

"You don't know what you lose by not hearing it—listen, 'They were married; and, in due course of time, a young prince was born as beautiful as the day.'"

"*Is it true?*"

"THERE ARE NOTHING BUT TRUTHS IN THIS LITTLE BOOK."

"Ah," grumbled Mr. Growler, who had been listening with the deepest interest, "I'm thankful that goose of a girl is safe at last. Who ever heard of such a sentimental ninny? Here's my young friend Adelaide; there is no deuced nonsense about her I'll be bound! *She's* my model!"

"*Dear Uncle* Growler—" began Adelaide. She stopped short. "*Uncle.*" What would he think? It came out so suddenly! She never meant to say it! And there was young Appreciate with absolute rays of delight beaming from his face, and looking as if he was holding himself back by the nape of the neck, to keep himself from falling at her

feet before all the company, and asking her to be Uncle Growler's niece, in deed and truth.

Blush after blush rose on her sweet face, and I was coming to the rescue, when Mrs. Wilton, reminding of Adelaide's loving kindness to her, bravely threw herself into the breach and speedily brought the enemy down upon her by declaring, "I like that Helen! She was splendid! I did the same thing myself when I was a girl! and I intend to write an account of a very remarkable adventure which happened to me for our next evening's entertainment."

Wonder of wonders! The millennium is surely coming, as some grave philosophers are now predicting. Instead of lighting down upon her like a bomb shell, we were all most agreeably surprised (not agreeably disappointed, as everybody says, which seems to me, to be like "*enjoying*" ill health, but surprised), when the clever, clumsy old gentleman gravely walked over to her, and taking her hand said, "I know it will be well worth hearing. I shall enjoy your romantic adventures very much."

I really cannot decide, in consideration of this speech, whether or not I ought to have mentally ejaculated, "*Sly* Uncle Growler!"

It was nearly twelve o'clock when our refreshments, mental and bodily, had been discussed. And hastening home, I went immediately up to my room. To my great surprise Adelaide followed me quickly, and, without removing the pretty white nubia or cloud, which lay so soft on her dark hair, threw herself into my arms and burst into tears.

"My child! my darling! what is the matter?" I exclaimed.

"Oh mamma! I—he—oh—you know!"

"What makes you tell me I know when I know nothing? Is the old cat dead?" (I did know.)

"Oh, mamma! how can you? Mr. Appreciate told me coming home that—that he loved me."

"And you answered, that you played with dolls every day with your little sister, and—"

"No, I did not. He asked me to be his wife, and I said I would if you consented."

Ah me! here was a monster wanting to take my child from me; and she not yet sixteen. A great pang shot through my heart. I felt with a new and sudden intensity, that my *rôle* on the stage of life was now to be changed; I was to pass on one side, and let the next generation take the central position. With a mixture of grief and pleasure—

pleasure, that my darling was only known to be loved—I kissed her wet cheek, and promised to look with kindness upon her lover when he came to plead his suit.

The next morning the little wife sent for me, entreating that I would come at once. I found her pale, terrified, hanging disconsolately over little Carrie's crib.

“Oh, aunt,” she cried, “I am so thankful you have come; my darling slept well last night; but look, what a fever she has now.”

“It is nothing but her cold, you little goose,” I answered, hoping to cheer her up; “only a cold, isn't it, Carrie?”

“Yes, auntie, come and kiss me,” said the child. I put my lips to her cheek. It felt like a coal of fire; her pulse was hard and quick; and I advised that the doctor should be sent for immediately; “not that there was any danger,” I said, “but as a precaution.”

The skilful family physician looked grave on his arrival, as the hoarse tones of the child's voice met his ear, and commenced the most energetic treatment at once; but, notwithstanding his efforts, Carrie lay all day in her little crib, tossing painfully from side to side.

In the evening she was taken up to change her clothes and bathe her feet. After this had been done, her mother kissed her, and lifted her tenderly, and laid her back in her bed. Looking up in surprise the child said, "Why, mamma, you forgot."

"What is it, my darling, my little precious kitten."

"Mamma, I did not say my prayers."

The tears started to the mother's eyes, as she replied, "I thought poor little Carrie was too ill."

"But I want to say them, dear mamma; you told me, God loved little children who tried to be good, and *never forgot to say their prayers.*"

A reproof from a babe! Her earliest lisping word after the names of her parents, had been a prayer; and now Harry, who had just entered, his little wife and I, with a feeling of awe, looked on the child, as she knelt in her crib, folded her tiny waxen hands, reverently closed her eyes, and in a hoarse whisper, which thrilled us with a sorrowful boding, said,

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake—"

She opened her eyes, "Mamma—how—if I should die 'fore I wake, how could I, mamma?"

The little mother became deadly pale, and turning to her husband, said, "Oh, Harry, why does she think of this?" Then folding Carrie in her arms, as if from thence not even death could take her child, she said, "Oh, my darling. The blessed Jesus, if he thought it best, could carry you in his arms to Heaven while you slept, there to be one of his precious little lambs forever."

"Will the blessed Jesus come and take me to-night?" asked the child, with a bright, sudden smile.

"Oh no," almost shrieked the mother, clasping her tigher; "don't, Carrie, don't talk so! God will soon make you well. Don't you want to stay with papa and mamma, who love you so dearly?"

"Why, yes," answered the dear little one, simply; and she sank down wearily on her pillow, and was soon in a troubled slumber.

I concluded to stay all night. With difficulty I persuaded Harry and his wife to try to get some rest, promising to call them should Carrie seem worse. As the little wife left the room I heard her murmuring to her husband, "Oh, Harry! if Jesus should take our darling——!"

The night wore on and waned. Carrie still slept under the influence of some soothing medicine; and the poor little sorrowing mother and

Harry were also quietly sleeping in an adjoining room. I was feeling so grateful, and hoping all danger was over, when a sound—sharp, frightful, like the air passing through a metallic tube, came from the little one's crib. Up I sprang, my heart beating violently, for well I knew what it boded. The mother was in the room the next instant, ghastly and trembling.

“Was it Carrie?” she gasped.

What need to tell our despairing grief as we three, and soon the doctor with us—laboring, but alas! helpless, to save—listened to the horrible sound of that suffering little breath, coming with a hoarse shrill scream from the smothering lungs and closing throat; her soft delicate features livid, almost purple, her head thrown violently back, straining, struggling for air. At length the dreadful cough assumed a veiled and husky tone; the wild, dilated eyes softened and looked upward with a wishful gaze, as if answering some loving glance, some beckoning finger which we could not see; and with the “first beam of the new-born day,” our darling had gently closed her eyes, and folding her tiny hands, as if again murmuring her prayer, “If I should die before I wake”—lay quite dead in her little crib.

Our readings were over. God in his inscrutable wisdom, which we cannot always fathom, but which is exact and right, had seen fit to take their child; and Harry clung with new and increasing love to his sorrowing little wife, who had only him on earth.

The charmed ring of their pleasant home here was broken, and their thoughts flew with yearning to His House Beautiful, in which Carrie would sit at the feet of the blessed Jesus forever.

Yes, He had taken her that sad night; but as she went she held fast in her tiny hand one end of a silken thread, the other buried in the very quick of their hearts: a precious silken thread, which would win and draw them, in God's own good time, to Carrie and Heaven at last.

No fear for Harry, now, little wife! God himself will complete the cure which you, with His blessing, so well began.

My simple, every-day story is finished: and now, of the sorrowful heart, weary traveller and patient invalid, who may have gone with me to the end, I would fain bespeak a kindly remembrance, while I offer to them, with my adieux, the cordial sympathy and tenderness of a sister and a friend.

THE END.





1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are listed in a vertical column, and the addresses are listed in a horizontal row next to them. The names are: [Illegible names]. The addresses are: [Illegible addresses].





